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HISTORY OF EUROPE

DURING

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

"BELLUM maxime omnium memorabile quæ unquam gesta sint me scriptum; quod Hannibale dūce Carthaginienses cum populo Romano gesserunt. Nam neque validiores opibus ullæ inter se civitates gentesque contulerunt arma, neque his ipsis tantum unquam virium aut reboris fuit: et haud ignotas belli artes inter se, sed expertas primo Punico conserebant bello; odiis etiam prope majoribus certarunt quam viribus; et adeo varia belli fortuna, ancepsque Mars fuit, ut propius periculum fuerit quæ viderent."—Liv. lib. 21.

HISTORY OF EUROPE

FROM THE

COMMENCEMENT OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

IN M.DCC.LXXXIX.

TO THE RESTORATION OF THE BOURBONS

IN M.DCCC.XV.

BY ARCHIBALD ALISON, F.R.S.E.

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HISTORY OF EUROPE.

CHAPTER XVII.

WAR IN POLAND.

PROVIDENCE has so interwoven human affairs, that, when we wish to retrace the revolutions of a people, and to investigate the causes of their grandeur or misfortunes, we are insensibly conducted step by step to their cradle. The slightest consideration of the history of Poland must be sufficient to prove, that that great nation, always combating, often victorious, but never securing its conquests, never obtaining the blessings of a stable government, has from the earliest times been on the decline. It emerged from the shock which overthrew the Roman empire, valiant, powerful, and extensive; from that hour it has invariably drooped, until at length it became the victim of its ancient provinces. The kingdom of Poland formerly extended from the Borysthenes to the Danube, and from the Euxine to the Baltic. The Sarmatia, of the ancients, it embraced within its bosom the original seat of those nations which subverted the Roman empire; Prussia, Moravia, Bohemia, Hungary, the Ukraine, Courland, Livonia, are all fragments of its mighty dominion. The Goths, who appeared as suppliants on the Danube, and were ferried across by Roman hands never to recede; the Huns, who under Attila spread desolation through the empire; the Slavonians, who overspread the greater part of Europe, emerged

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XVII.

1794.

1.
Immense
extent of
Poland in
former
times.

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XVII.

1794.

1 Salvandy,
i. 18.2.
Physical
description
of Poland.2 Malte
Brun, vi.
474, 46.
Roepell,
Geschichte
Polens, i.
3, 5.3.
Its great
rivers.

from its vast and uncultivated plains. But its subsequent progress has but ill corresponded to such a commencement. While, in all other states, liberty, riches, power, and glory, have advanced with equal steps, and the victories of one age have contributed to the advancement of that which succeeded it: in Poland alone the greatest triumphs have been immediately succeeded by the greatest reverses; the establishment of internal freedom has led to nothing but external disaster, and the deliverer of Europe in one age was in the next swept from the book of nations.¹

The name of Poland, derived from the word signifying a plain, (*pole*), expresses its real geographical character. It consists almost entirely of an immense level surface, which extends, with the exception only of a range of low hills that, to the south of Volhynia, branch out from the Carpathian mountains, from the shores of the Baltic to those of the Euxine. Part of this vast level surface is composed of rich alluvial soil, but the greater part of it is a sandy plain, of a dark red colour on the shores of the sea, but white in the interior of the country. Pomerania, part of Denmark, and nearly the whole of Prussia, formerly provinces of Poland, consist of the same sandy flat. The waves of the ocean, or of floods which in former revolutions of the globe have rolled over this wide expanse, have strewed its surface with huge blocks of granite and other rocks foreign to the Polish territory, which have evidently been brought from a great distance; and in many places vast collections of bones of the elephant, the rhinoceros, and other tropical animals, as well as the mammoth, the mastodon, and other monsters, the race of which is now extinct upon the earth, are found, and attract the wonder alike of the illiterate peasant and learned observer of nature. This immense plain nowhere rises more than a few hundred feet above the level of the sea, and the ascent to the most elevated part is so gradual as to be imperceptible, save from the direction of the rivers, which are very numerous, and form a remarkable feature in the country.²

Notwithstanding this general level surface, the summit level of the country is very distinctly marked, from the one side of which the waters flow to the Euxine, from the other to the Baltic Sea. This summit level itself, however,

is not in general a ridge, or range of hills, but a swampy expanse, in the marshes of which the principal streams of the country take their rise; and, as with the rivers Amazons and Orinoco in the pampas of South America, the surface between their sources is so level that in floods they communicate with each other. This is particularly the case with the Priecz, a tributary of the Dnieper, which in spring is connected with the feeders of the Bug and the Niemen. The principal rivers which descend from the southern declivity of this marshy plateau are the Dniester and the Dnieper, with the great tributary of the latter, the Bug; to the north flows the Vistula, which, taking its rise in the Carpathian mountains, after being swelled by fifty tributary streams, such as the San, the Pilica, and the Narew, rolls its ample waves to the Baltic. One of these, the San, rises under the shade of a huge oak, which overhangs on the other side the fountains of the Theisse and of the Stry, which are among the principal sources of the Dniester. The Vartha and the Niemen traverse also the northern plains of Poland; and their waters, flowing in a bed but little depressed below the general surface of the adjacent country, frequently overflow, and convert the whole plain, to a considerable distance on either side, into a great lake. On the other hand, the Dniester and the Dnieper, and the other rivers which descend towards the Euxine, meander in deep beds, having steep banks of rock or gravel, which restrain their ample currents even in the greatest floods, and render the general surface of the adjacent country comparatively dry and salubrious.¹

Poland has few minerals in its bosom, a peculiarity which frees it equally from the wealth consequent on the working of mines, and the social depravity which such operations seldom fail, in the end, to induce in their train. For this defect, however, it has received more than a compensation in the broad expanse of its level surface, and the general fertility of its soil. The plains of the Ukraine, or of Poland south of the ridge which divides the flowing of its waters, have long been celebrated for their extraordinary and surpassing fertility, and, like the Delta of Egypt, or the plain of Mesopotamia, yield the richest crops with very little care from the husbandman.

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1794.

¹ Malte
Brun, vii.
475, 479.
Roepell, i.
7, 11. Dia-
gossi, lib.
i. p. 18.

⁴.
Great fer-
tility of its
soil.

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XVII.

1794.

Podolia, also, on the southern declivity of Poland, hardly less rich, exhibits more varied and agreeable features. Pleasant hills, often crowned by beautiful groves, fill the whole province, which extends from the Dniester to the Boh, and is bounded on the north by the plains of Volhynia, on the south-east by the steppes of the Ukraine. These hills, which almost become mountains in the neighbourhood of Medryz Zee, exhibit alternately fertile valleys and healthful pastures. The soil, where it is arable, yields noble crops with hardly any cultivation; and so far back as the middle of the fifteenth century, Greece and the islands of the Archipelago were supplied by Podolian wheat, transported to their shores in Venetian vessels. The climate of this favoured province is less severe than that of the other parts of Poland. While they are still clothed with the garb of winter, the verdure of spring has already appeared on its sunny slopes. Melons, mulberries, and other southern fruits, ripen without care in the open air; and as summer is free from the malaria which infests the plains of the Ukraine, so winter is from its icy cold.¹

¹ Roepell,
Geschichte
Polens, i. 11.

5.
Face of the
country in
the northern
provinces.

To the north of the summit level, in the plains watered by the Vistula and its tributary streams, the soil is less rich, and stands more in need of the artificial aid of draining and manure. But a very slight application of these advantages is sufficient to make it produce the finest crops of wheat, barley, oats, and rye; and if cultivated in a superior manner, and opened up by canals, railroads, and common roads, for which the level surface offers the greatest possible advantages, it is capable of being made to rival the plain of Lombardy or the fields of Flanders in variety and riches of agricultural produce. Already it is considered as the granary of Europe; the banks of the Vistula are to the British empire, in seasons of domestic scarcity, what those of the Nile were to the ancient Romans. Wretched, however, is the cultivation, deplorable the condition of the serfs, by whose labours these noble crops are reared.* Ploughs and harrows of the rudest construction turn up the soil; scarcely any manure enriches the fields; frequent and long-continued fallows alone restore the exhausted fertility of nature. Raising the finest crops of red wheat, the indigent husbandman lives only on black rye bread;² water is his only drink, though his hands reap

² Roepell,
i. 9, 12
Surowrecki
de la Dé-
cadence de
la Pologne,
154. Malte
Brun, vii.
484, 486.

extensive crops of barley; and the luxuries of animal food and comfortable dwellings are unknown to the peasantry inhabiting a country where the hand of nature has covered the earth with rich and boundless pastures, and a profusion of fine forest, has furnished the most ample materials for the construction of houses.

To the general flat and uniform character of Polish scenery, an exception must be made in regard to that part of the country where the Vistula takes its rise. Numerous rocky eminences, interspersed with limpid streams, there ascend with a uniform slope towards the Carpathian mountains, and their summits are often crowned with venerable castles and monasteries, which throw an air of antiquity and grandeur over the scenery. It is there that Wawell, the once magnificent castle of the royal race of the Jagellons, looks down on the ancient capital of the mighty Polish empire, where its kings, so long taken from their race, were crowned; it is there that, adorned with numerous steeples, and splendid churches, and ancient edifices, Cracow lies stretched at the foot of the mountains in the valley of the Vistula. Every thing in that romantic region bespeaks the former grandeur and present decay of Poland. Beyond it, on a high mountain, stands the monastery of Tyniec, one of the richest and most ancient abbeys of the Benedictines in Poland. On one side is seen the picturesque mount of Kosciusko; to the south, the distant summits of the Carpathian range. Less mountainous, but by no means level, is the land north of Cracow, towards the upper Vistula. It consists of a plateau, eight or nine hundred feet above the sea, intersected by deep and precipitous ravines, like those of Saxon Switzerland in Germany, clothed with sable woods, and often surmounted by princely castles and noble chateaux now in ruins. On one of the precipices, surrounded by rich foliage, stands Oycow, once the splendid residence of Casimir the Great. Near the sources of the Pilica, in the middle of a vast forest, stands Ogrodzieniec, formerly the seat of the mighty Firley. Every thing in this romantic region reminds the traveller of departed greatness; and in traversing these deserted halls or ruined fanes, the mournful motto of the Courtenneys recurs to the mind, "Quomodo lapsus: quid feci?"¹

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1794.

5.
Romantic
scenery in
the neigh-
bourhood
of the Car-
pathian
mountains.

¹ Roepell,
Geschichte
Polens, i,
3, 4, 7.

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1794.

6.

Small cities
in Poland.

Overrun by Jews, and but little supported either by the industry of their own inhabitants, or the wealth of the adjacent country, the towns of Poland exhibit a melancholy proof of the extent to which the folly of man can render unavailing all the choicest gifts of nature. Though the total population of the country, after the partition of 1772, was still above fourteen millions, Warsaw, Lublin, and Cracow were the only towns in it which deserved the name of cities, the first of which contained at that period only ninety thousand inhabitants, the second, twenty-five, the third, twelve thousand. At this time, notwithstanding the great increase in every branch of industry which has taken place under the severe, but regular and steady government of Russia, the Polish towns, considering the prodigious natural resources of the country, exhibit a deplorable picture of squalid misery, of useless pride and general idleness.* Such activity as does exist among them is almost entirely to be ascribed to the Jews, who form, as it were, a nation by themselves encamped in Poland, and have gradually, from their industrious habits, engrossed all the lucrative employments in it. The kingdom of Poland properly so called, now entirely absorbed by Russia, contains 6370 square marine leagues, or 50,960 geographical miles: an extent of surface, however, greater than that of England and Wales together, which contain 46,000; but which is thinly peopled by only 4,582,000 inhabitants. Such is the last remnant, and it under foreign dominion, of the once mighty empire of Poland: of the conquests of Boleslas, and the dominions of the Jagellons: of a country which, in the days of its greatness, carried its victorious arms from the Baltic to the Euxine, and from Moscow to the Elbe.¹

This extraordinary decline has all arisen from one cause—that Poland has retained, till a very recent period, the independence and *equality* of savage life. It has neither

* The following is the present population of the principal Polish towns:—

Warsaw,	-	-	-	-	136,554
Cracow,	-	-	-	-	25,000
Lublin,	-	-	-	-	12,000
Kalisch,	-	-	-	-	7,300
Plock,	-	-	-	-	6,500
Zamosc,	-	-	-	-	5,000
Sewalki,	-	-	-	-	3,500

—MALTE BRUN, vii. 534-543.

¹ Malte Brun, vii. 537, 530, 543.

been subjugated by more polished, nor itself vanquished more civilised states. The restlessness and valour of the pastoral character have, in their native plains, remained unchanged during fifteen hundred years, neither grafted on the stock of urban liberty, nor moulded by the institutions of civilised society. Poland shows what in its original state was the equality of the shepherd life.

Neither the resistance, nor the tastes, nor the intelligence, nor the blood of vanquished nations, have altered in its inhabitants the inclinations and passions of the savage character. We may see in its history what would have been the fate of all the Northern nations, if their fierce and unbending temper had not been tempered by the blood, and moulded by the institutions of a more advanced civilisation, and in the anarchy of its diets, what would have been the representative system had the dream of Montesquieu been well founded, that it was found in the woods.¹

The shepherds who wandered in the plains of Sarmatia were, like all other pastoral tribes, inflamed by the strongest passion for that savage freedom which consists in leading a life exempt from all control—in roaming at will over boundless plains, resting where they chose, and departing when they wished. In their incursions into the Roman provinces they collected immense troops of captives, who were compelled to perform the works of drudgery, in which their masters disdained to engage; to attend the cattle, drive the waggons, and make the arms. Their imperious lords, acknowledging no superior themselves, knew no restraint in the treatment of their inferiors. They asserted a grievous tyranny over that unhappy race, with the same energy with which they would have resisted any attempt to encroach on their own independence. Such as Poland then was, it has ever since continued—a race of jealous freemen and iron-bound slaves; a vast and wild democracy ruling a captive people;

—“*Ferrea iuga
Insanumque Forum.*”

It is a mistake to suppose that the representative system was found in the woods. What was found there was not any thing resembling parliaments, but Polish equality. The pastoral nations of the North, equally with the citizens

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XVII.

1794.

7.

Causes of its
continued
disasters.

Salv. i. 29.

8.

It has re-
tained the
pastoral and
independent
character
unmixed.

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1794.

9.
Representative system
arose from
the Christian Coun-
cils.

¹ Thierry,
ii. 286.

¹ Salv. i 107,
108.

10.
No inter-
mixture of
foreign cus-
toms in
Poland.

of the Republics of antiquity, had no idea of the exercise of the rights of freemen but by the concurrence of *all* the citizens. Of course this privilege could only be exercised by a small number of them when the state became populous; and hence the narrow base on which, with them, the fabric of liberty was framed. The assemblies of the Champ-de-Mai, accordingly, like the early convocations of the Normans in England, were attended by all the freemen who held of the king; and sixty thousand Norman horsemen assembled at Winchester, to deliberate with the conqueror concerning the vanquished kingdom.¹ This was the original system in all the European states, and this is what the Polish diet has always continued. It was the Christian Church, the parent of so many lofty doctrines and new ideas, which had the glory of offering to the world, amidst the wreck of ancient institutions, the model of a form of government which gives to all classes the right of suffrage, by establishing a system which may embrace the remotest interests; which preserves the energy, and avoids the principal evils of democracy; which maintains the Tribune, and shuns the strife of the Forum. The Christian Councils were the first example of representative assemblies; there were united the whole Roman world; there a priesthood, which embraced the civilised earth, assembled by means of delegates to deliberate on the affairs of the Universal Church. When Europe revived, it adopted the same model. Every nation by degrees borrowed the customs of the Church, then the sole depositary of the traditions of civilisation. It was the religion of the vanquished people; it was the clergy, who instructed them in this admirable system, which flourished in the councils of Nice, Sardis, and Byzantium, centuries before it was heard of in the Western World, and which did not arise in the woods of Germany, but in the catacombs of Rome during the sufferings of the primitive Church.¹

Vienna was the frontier station of the Roman empire. It never extended into the Sarmatian wilds, and hence the chief cause of the continued calamities of the descendants of their first inhabitants. It was the infusion of the free spirit of the Scythian tribes into the decaying provinces of the Roman empire, and the union of barbaric energy

with antiquated civilisation, which produced the glories of modern Europe. In Poland alone, savage independence remained un moulded by foreign admixture, unchanged by foreign blood, untaught by foreign wisdom, and the customs of the earliest ages continued the same down to the partition of the monarchy. After representative assemblies had been established for centuries in Germany, France, and England, the Poles adhered to the ancient custom of summoning every man to discuss, sword in hand, the affairs of the Republic. A hundred thousand horsemen met in the field of Volo, near Warsaw, to deliberate on public affairs, and the distractions of these stormy diets weakened the nation even more than the attacks of its foreign enemies. Among them was established, to their sorrow, the real system which was invented in the woods.¹

In Poland, accordingly, the structure of society was essentially different from that which obtained in any other part of Europe. The feudal system, the chain of military dependence from the throne to the cottage, has in every age been there unknown. The Republic was composed entirely of two classes, both numerous and mutually hostile, the one destined to labour, dejection, and servitude; the other to independence, activity, and war. The iron band of a resident and strongly based body of foreign proprietors, which has so firmly held together the discordant elements of modern society, which united the vanquished, strong in their civilisation, their laws, and their religion, and the victors, strong in their power, their valour, and their conquests; which bound alike the nobility and the priesthood, the municipalities and the throne; which in the wisdom of Providence, amidst many evils, produced innumerable blessings, was wanting to the Poles—and thence it is that Poland is no more. Thence it was that she exhibited the spectacle of a nation without a people, since the numerous class of slaves could not deserve that name; of armies alike without discipline, infantry, or artillery; of a state undefended by frontier towns; of cities without a race of burghers, without commerce or industry; of a republic where the supreme power was practically annihilated, for the restraints on it were omnipotent.²

The taste and the habits of the nomad tribes have,

CHAP.
XVII.

1794.

¹ Salv. i. 109.
Rulh. i. 10,
14.

11.
Its society
differently
constructed
from any in
Europe.

² Salv. i. 31.
Rulh. i. 14.

CHAP.^c
XVII.

1794.

12.
They still
retain the
taste and
habits of the
Nomad
tribes.

almost to our time, predominated among the Poles. Their language, their manners, even their dress, long remained unchanged—the frequent use of furs, the flowing pelisse, caps of the skins of wild beasts, the absence of linen, and the magnificence of their arms, are the characteristics of their national costume. Till within these few years they wore the singular crown of hair, which in the time of the Scythians encircled their bare heads. The passion for a wandering life has been transmitted to their latest posterity, and remains undiminished amidst all the refinements of civilisation. To travel in the country, living in tents, to pass from one encampment to another, has been in every age one of the most favourite amusements of the Polish noblesse; and it was in such occupations that the last years of the great Sobieski were employed. This fierce and unbending race of freemen preserved inviolate, as the Magna Charta of Poland, the right to assemble in person, and deliberate on the public affairs of the state. That terrible assembly, where all the proprietors of the soil were convoked, constituted at once the military strength of the nation in war, and its legislature in peace. There were discussed alike the public concerns of the Republic, the private feuds or grievances of individuals, the questions of peace or war, the formation of laws, the division of plunder, and the election of the sovereign.¹

¹ Rulh. i. 15.
Salv. i. 39.

13.
Their early
and indomitable
democratic spirit.

In the eyes of this haughty race, the will of a freeman was a thing which no human power should attempt to subjugate; and therefore the fundamental principle of all their deliberations was, that *unanimity* was essential to every resolution. This relic of savage equality, of which the traces are still to be found in the far-famed jury system of England, was productive of incalculable evils to the Republic; and yet so blind are men to the cause of their own ruin, that it was uniformly adhered to with enthusiastic resolution by the Poles, and is even spoken of with undisguised admiration by their national historians. But all human institutions must involve some method of extricating public affairs, and as unanimity was not to be expected among so numerous and impassioned a body as their diet, and the idea was not to be entertained for a moment of constraining the will of any citizen by an adverse majority, they adopted the only other means of

expediting business, they *massacred the recusants*. This measure appeared to them an incomparably lesser evil than carrying measures by a majority. "Because," said they, "acts of violence are few in number, and affect only the individual sufferers; but if once the precedent is established of compelling the minority to yield to the majority, there is an end to any security for the liberties of the people." It may easily be imagined what discords and divisions were nursed up under such a system. Fanned by the flame excited at all their national diets, the different provinces of the republic have in every age nourished the most profound animosity against each other. The waywodes and palatinates into which every province was divided, for the administration of justice, or the arrangements of war, became divided against each other, and transmitted the feuds of the earliest times to their remotest descendants. "That Hierarchy of enmities," as the Poles expressed it, descended even to private families; in the progress of time, religious discord divided the whole republic into two parties nearly equal in strength, and implacable in hostility, and Poland was transformed into an immense field of combat, destined never to know either tranquillity or truce till it passed under the yoke of a foreign master.¹

The clergy, that important body who have done so much for the freedom of Europe, never formed a separate order, or possessed any spiritual influence in Poland. Composed entirely of the nobles, they had no sympathy with the serfs, whom they disdained to admit to any of their sacred offices. Their bishops interfered, not as prelates but as barons, not with the wand of peace but the sword of dissension. The priesthood formed in their stormy diets a sort of tribunes, subject to the passions of the multitude, but exempt, by reason of their sacred character, from the danger which constituted a check upon their extravagance. This was another consequence of the Poles not having settled in a conquered country; the clergy of the other European states, drawn from the vanquished people, formed a link between them and their conquerors, and by reason of the influence which their intellectual superiority conferred, gradually softened the yoke of bondage to the vanquished;² the Polish priesthood, formed entirely of the

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¹ Salv. l. 40.
41. Rulh. i.
11, 24, 25.

14
Clergy
formed a
different
body from
any in Eu-
rope.

² Salv. i. 62.

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nobility, added to the chains of slavery the fetters of barbaric superstition.

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15.
Nobility
never en-
gaged in any
profession
or trade.

As if every thing was destined to concur for the disorganisation of Poland, the inequality of fortunes, and the rise of urban industry, the source of so much benefit to all the other European monarchies, was there productive only of positive evil. Fearful of being compelled to divide their power with the inferior classes of society, when elevated by riches and intelligence, the nobles affixed the stigma of dishonour to every lucrative or useful profession. Their maxim was, that nobility is not lost by indigence or domestic servitude, but is totally destroyed by commerce and industry; their constant policy was to debasè the serfs from all knowledge of the use of arms, both because they had learned to fear, and because they continued to despise them. In fine, the Polish nobility, strenuously resisting every gradation of power as an usurpation, every kind of industry as a degradation, every attempt at superiority as an outrage, remained to the close of their career an idle and haughty democracy, at open variance with all the principles on which the prosperity of society depends.¹

¹ Salv. i. 72.

16.
Which all
fell into the
hands of the
Jews.

As some species of industry, however, is indispensable where wealth has begun to accumulate; and as the vast possessions of the nobility gave great encouragement to those who would minister to their wants, the industry of towns insensibly increased, and an urban population gradually arose. But as the nobles were too proud, and the serfs too indigent, or too ignorant, to engage in such employments, they fell exclusively into the hands of a foreign race, who were willing to submit to the degradation they imposed for the sake of the profit they brought. The Jews spread like a leprosy over the country, monopolising every lucrative employment, excluding the peasantry from the chance even of bettering their condition by emerging out of it; and superadding to the instinctive aversion of the free citizens at every species of labour, the horror connected with the occupations of that hated race. Thus, the rise of towns, and the privileges of corporations, the origin of free institutions in so many other countries, were there productive only of evil,² by augmenting the disinclination of all classes to engage in

² Salv. i. 84,
85.

their pursuits ; the Jews multiplied in a country where they were enabled to engross all the industrial occupations ; and at this moment above half of the whole descendants of Abraham are to be found in what formerly were the Polish dominions.

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Five hundred years before liberty and equality became the watchword of the French Revolution, they were the favourite principles of the Polish republic. Anarchy and disorder did not prevail in the country because the throne was elective ; but the throne became elective because the people were too jealous of their privileges to admit of hereditary succession. For a hundred and sixty years the race of the Jagellons sat on the throne of Poland, with as regular a succession as the Plantagenets of England ; and the dynasty of the Piasts enjoyed the government for four hundred years ; but all the efforts of the monarchs of these houses were unequal to the formation of a regular government. Contrary to what obtained in every other part of the world, it was always the great kings of Poland who were ultimately overthrown ; and their reigns which were the most stormy of its annals. The supreme authority, which elsewhere in the progress of civilisation was strengthened by the spoils of feudal power, became in Poland only weakened by the lapse of time. All the efforts toward aggrandisement of their greatest monarchs, were shattered against the compact, independent, and courageous body of nobles, whom the crown could neither overawe by menaces, nor subdue by violence. In the plenitude of their democratic spirit, they would for long admit no distinction among themselves, but that which arose from actual employment ; and never recognised, till a very recent period, the titles and honours which, in other states, have long been hereditary. Even when they were established, the jurisdictions were only for life. Democratic equality could not brook the idea of an hereditary body of rulers. Their waywodes or military chieftains, their palatines or leaders of counties, their castellans or governors of castles, enjoyed, from the earliest period down to recent times, their authority for that period only. These officers, far from being able in Poland, as in other states, to render their dignities hereditary, were not always even nominated by the king. Their authority, especially that of the palatines, gave equal umbrage to the monarchs whom they were

17.
Liberty and
equality the
early princi-
ples of the
people.

¹ Rulh. i. 5,
14, 24. Salv.
i. 71, 72,
128.

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* 18.
Crown was
always elec-
tive.

bound to obey, as to the nobles whom they were intended to lead. There was thus authority and power nowhere in the state.

The kings of the Piast race made frequent and able efforts to create a gradation of rank in the midst of that democracy, and a body of burghers by the side of these nobles; but all their attempts proved ineffectual. "A race of monarchs, whose succession was frequently interrupted, and their authority always contested, could not carry on any steady or consistent plan of government; while, unlike all other states, it was the people who there maintained a systematic and uniform line of conduct. The crown of Poland, though enjoyed long by the great families of the Jagellons and the Piasts, has always been elective. The king possessed the disposal of all offices in the republic; and a principal part of his duty consisted in going from province to province to administer justice in person. "By my faith," said Henry of Valois, when elected to the throne, "these Poles have made me nothing but a judge!" But the nobility themselves carried into execution all his sentences by their own armed force. The command of the troops was not in general conferred upon the sovereign; and as there never was any considerable standing army in the service of the republic, the military force of the throne was altogether nugatory. Poland affords the most decisive demonstration that the chief evil of an elective monarchy, and that which has always made it so calamitous where it has prevailed, is to be found, not in the contests for the crown, which may be transient, but the prostration of its power, which is lasting, and renders the protection of a stable government unknown in the state.¹

¹ Salv. i. 72,
128. Rulh.
i. 17, 18, 19.

19.
General As-
semblies of
the people,
and the libe-
rum veto.

But the insurmountable evil, which in every age has opposed the formation of a regular government in this unhappy country, was the privilege, too firmly established to be ever shaken, which all the citizens had, of assembling together to deliberate on the affairs of the state, and of any one interposing a positive negative on the most important resolutions. So far from adopting the prudent maxim of all regular governments, that a civil war is the greatest of evils, they have by this institution given to their insurrections a legal form. From generation to generation the maxim has been handed down by the Poles:—"Burn your houses, and wander over the country with your arms in

your hands, rather than submit to the smallest infringement on your liberties." These assemblies, when once met, united in themselves the powers of all the magistrates; they were to that republic what the dictatorship was to ancient Rome. A Pole, compelled to submit to a plurality of suffrages, would have considered himself subjected to the most grievous despotism; and consequently no resolution of the Diet was binding, unless it was unanimously agreed to by all the citizens. Any citizen, by the privilege of the *liberum veto*, had the power of dissolving the most numerous of these assemblies, or negating their most important acts; and although the Poles were fully sensible of the ruinous nature of this privilege, and pursued with eternal maledictions the individual who exercised it, yet they never could be prevailed upon to consent to its abandonment.¹

These assemblies, so famous in Polish history, so fatal to her inhabitants, presented so extraordinary a spectacle, that it is hardly possible, in reading even the most authentic descriptions of them, to believe that we have not stepped into the regions of eastern romance. The plain of Volo, to the west of Warsaw, was the theatre, from the earliest times, of the popular elections. Soon the impatient populace, or general assembly of the free Poles, covered that vast area with its waves, like an army prepared to commence an assault on a fortified town. The innumerable piles of arms; the immense tables round which faction united its supporters; a thousand jousts with the javelin or the lance; a thousand squadrons engaged in mimic war; a thousand parties of palatines, governors of castles, and other dignified authorities, who traversed the ranks, distributing exhortations, party songs, and largesses; a thousand cavalcades of gentlemen, who rode, according to custom, with their battle-axes by their side, and discussed at the gallop the dearest interests of the republic; innumerable quarrels, originating in drunkenness, and terminating in blood: Such were the scenes of tumult, amusement, and war,—a faithful mirror of Poland,—which, as far as the eye could reach, filled the plain. The arena was closed in by a vast circle of tents, which embraced, as in an immense girdle, the plain of Volo, the shores of the Vistula, and the spires of Warsaw. The horizon seemed bounded by a range

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¹ Rulh. i. 18,
24. Salv. i.
111.

20.
Description
of these as-
semblies.

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¹ Salv. ii.
190.

of snowy mountains, of which the summits were portrayed in the hazy distance by their dazzling whiteness. The camp formed another city, with its markets, its gardens, its hotels, and its monuments. There the great displayed their Oriental magnificence; the nobles, the palatines, vied with each other in the splendour of their horses and equipages; and the stranger who beheld for the first time that luxury, worthy of the last and greatest of the nomad people, was never weary of admiring the immense hotels, the porticoes, the colonnades, the galleries of painted or gilded stuffs, the castles of cotton and silk, with their drawbridges, towers, and ditches.¹

21.
Order of the
proceedings.

On the day of the elections the three orders mounted on horseback. The princes, the palatines, the bishops, the prelates, proceeded towards the plain of Volo, surrounded by eighty thousand mounted citizens, any one of whom might, at the expiry of a few hours, find himself King of Poland; and each of whom enjoyed the absolute power of stopping at pleasure the whole proceedings. They all bore in their countenances, even under the livery or banners of a master, the pride arising from that ruinous privilege. The European dress nowhere appeared on that solemn occasion. The children of the desert strove to hide the furs and skins in which they were clothed under chains of gold and the glitter of jewels. Their bonnets were composed of panther skins; plumes of eagles or herons surmounted them: on their front were the most splendid precious stones. Their robes of sable or ermine were bound with velvet or silver: their girdles studded with jewels; over all their furs were suspended chains of diamonds. One hand of each nobleman was without a glove; on it was the splendid ring on which the arms of his family were engraved, the mark, as in ancient Rome, of the equestrian order—another proof of the intimate connexion between the race, the customs, and the traditions of the northern tribes, and the founders of the Eternal City.²

² Salv. ii.
192, 194.

22.
Splendour of
the dresses.

But nothing in this rivalry of magnificence could equal the splendour of their arms. Double poniards, double cimeters, set with brilliants; bucklers of costly workmanship, battle-axes enriched in silver, and glittering with emeralds and sapphires; bows and arrows richly gilt, which were borne at festivals, in remembrance of the

ancient customs of the country, were to be seen on every side. The horses shared in this melange of barbarism and refinement; sometimes cased in iron, at others decorated with the richest colours, they bent under the weight of the sabres, the lances, and javelins by which the senatorial order marked their rank. The bishops were distinguished by their grey or green hats, and yellow or red pantaloons, magnificently embroidered with diverse colours. Often they laid aside their sacerdotal habits, and signalised their address as young cavaliers, by the beauty of their arms, and the management of their horses. In that crowd of the equestrian order, there was no gentleman so humble as not to try to rival this magnificence. Many carried, in furs and arms, their whole fortunes on their back. Numbers had sold their votes to some of the candidates, for the vanity of appearing with some additional ornament before their fellow-citizens. And the people, whose dazzled eyes beheld all this magnificence, were almost without clothing; their long beards, naked legs, and filth, indicated, even more strongly than their pale visages and dejected air, all the miseries of servitude.¹

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1794.

¹ Salv. ii.
194, 197.

At length the utter impossibility of getting any thing done with these immense assemblies, frequently embracing a hundred thousand citizens on horseback, and the experienced difficulty of finding them subsistence for any considerable time, led to the introduction, to a certain extent, of the representative system. This change took place in the year 1467, about two hundred years after it had been established in England, and a hundred and eighty after its introduction into Germany. Unfortunately, however, it never prevailed generally in the kingdom, and was accompanied with such restrictions as tended to increase rather than diminish the divisions of the people. The labouring classes were not at all represented; and the nobility never abandoned, and frequently exercised, their right of assembling in person on all important occasions. These general diets being, after this change, rare, were more generally attended; and as they were assembled only on extraordinary occasions—as the election of a king, or a question of peace or war—the passions of the people were increased by the importance of their suffrages,² and

23.
Representative system never thoroughly established.

² Rulh. i. 23.
Salv. i. 110,
113.

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24.
Pledges uni-
versally ex-
acted from
the deputies.

inexperience added to the sudden intoxication of absolute power.

In the true spirit of their democratic institutions, the Poles had no sooner established a representative system, than they surrounded it with such checks, as not only rendered it totally useless, but positively hurtful. Not unfrequently the electors, terrified at the powers with which they had invested their representatives, hastened, sword in hand, to the place of their meeting, prepared, if necessary, to oppose open force to the laws. These stormy assemblages were called "Diets under the buckler." The representatives continued in the new assemblies the ruinous law of unanimity, in spite of the advice of the wisest men, and in opposition to their continual remonstrances. The power of putting by a single vote a negative on all proceedings, of course, was more frequently exercised by one among four hundred deputies, who was entrusted with the interest of an extensive palatinate, than by an insulated individual amidst a hundred thousand of his fellow-citizens. The check, too, which the terror of being massacred imposed upon the exercise of this right in the primary assembly, was removed when, in the Chamber of Deputies, uplifted sabres were no longer ready to exterminate the recusant. Moreover the electors, with the jealousy of the democratic spirit, uniformly exacted from every representative a pledge how he was to vote on every question that came before the Assembly; and after every session held what they called *post-comitial diets*, the object of which was to call him to account for the vote he had given on every occasion. In these diets the representatives ran the most imminent risk of being murdered, if they had deviated at all from the instructions they had received.¹

¹ Rulh. i. 24,
26. Salv. i.
114.

25.
Evils of the
Liberum
Veto pos-
sessed by
each deputy.

The sense of this danger made the deputies adhere strictly to the orders given them; and as their instructions were extremely various, the practical result was, that unanimity was impossible, and business could not be carried through. To avoid this, the majority, in some instances, proceeded by main force to pass measures in spite of the minority; but as this was deemed a direct violation of the constitution, it invariably led to civil war. Confederations of the minorities were established, diets appointed, marshals

elected, and these deplorable factions, which alternately had the king a chief and a captive, were regarded as a constitutional mode of extricating the rights of the people. This right of opposition, in the space of two centuries, had the effect of utterly annihilating every other power in the government. The deputies, without ever having made a direct attack upon the throne; without ever having attempted to wrest from the king or the senate the power allotted to them in the constitution, succeeded at length in suspending and neutralising every other branch of Legislature. The popular attachment to the veto augmented with the progress of wealth, and the increasing opulence of the great families who composed the senate; as it reduced all the citizens, at least on some occasions, to a state of perfect equality. The only astonishing thing is, that, with such institutions, the valour of the Polish nobility should so long have concealed the weakness arising from their unruly disposition. One would imagine, that a people with such a government could not exist a year, and yet, such was their mingled energy and infatuation, they seemed never wearied either of victory or folly.¹

The political crisis which, at the close of the sixteenth century, convulsed all Europe, reinstated the Poles at once in all their ruinous democratic privileges, which the influence of their preceding monarchs had somewhat impaired. In the year 1573, on the death of the last race of the Jagellons, the nation with one voice reasserted and obtained all its original immunities. The command of the armies, and the administration of justice, were taken from the crown; two hetmans appointed, one for Lithuania, and one for Poland; each was invested with an absolute command over the forces of these rival provinces of the republic, and they too often, by their jealousies, marred the effect of the most glorious triumphs; while the administration of justice was confided to a few supreme tribunals, composed of the nobility, who were changed every fifteen months, by new elections, as if to prevent justice ever being administered by those who had any acquaintance with law. Two standing armies were appointed, one for Lithuania, the other for Poland; but hardly amounting in all to ten thousand men; and even for these the jealousy of the nobility would only permit them to vote the most scanty

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¹ Rulh. j. 26,
27. Salv. i.
115.

26.
Great increase of the democratic power at the close of the sixteenth century.

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• 1794.

¹ Salv. i. 125,
127. Rulh.
i. 31.

supplies, which required to be renewed at each successive diet. In consequence of this circumstance, the Poles never had a regular force on which they could rely, worthy either of the name or the strength of the republic; and when all the adjoining states were daily consolidating their strength, and providing for the public defence by powerful standing armies, they had almost nothing to rely on for the maintenance of their independence but the tumultuary array of barbarous times.¹

27.
Nature of
the national
force.

Their forces, such as they were, consisted of five parts; the national troops, or a small body of regular soldiers, paid and equipped by the republic; the *pospolite*, or general assembly of all the free citizens on horseback; the armed valets, all forming part of the noble or free class, whose rapine in general did more harm than their courage did service; the artillery, which, from the want of funds for its support, was usually in the most wretched condition; and the mercenaries, composed chiefly of Germans, whose services would have been of great importance, had their fidelity been secured by regularity of pay, but who were generally in a state of mutiny for want of it. The whole body of the *pospolite*, the volunteers, the *valets d'armée*, and a large body of the mercenaries and national troops, served on horseback. The heavy cavalry, in particular, constituted the strength of the armies; there were to be found united, riches, splendour, and number. They were divided into cuirassiers and hussars; the former clothed in steel, man and horse bearing casque and cuirass, lance and sabre, bow and carabine; the latter defended only by a twisted hauberk, which descended from the head, over the shoulders and breast, and armed with a sabre and pistol. Both were distinguished by the splendour of their dress and equipage, and the number and costly array of their mounted servants, accoutred in the most bizarre manner, with huge black plumes, and skins of bears and other wild beasts. It was the pride of this body that they were composed of men, all measured, as they expressed it, by the same standard; that is, equally enjoying the rights to obey only their God and their swords, and equally destined, perhaps, to step one day into the throne of the Piasts and the Jagellons. They boasted that, "if the heaven itself were to fall, they would support it on the point of their

lances." The hussars and cuirassiers were called *towarzisz*—that is, companions; they called each other by that name, and they were designated in the same way by the sovereign, whose chief boast was to be *primus inter pares*, the first among equals. But all these forces were in general in the most miserable state of destitution. The regular army, almost always without pay, was generally without discipline, and totally destitute of every kind of equipment: the castles and fortified towns had no other defences but walls, which age had almost every where reduced to ruins; the arsenals were in general empty; all those great establishments, which in other states bespeak the constant vigilance of government, were wanting. Poland had no other resources but these armed confederations, which, nevertheless, frequently saved the republic in the midst of the greatest perils; and more than once, through the unconquerable valour of the nobles, preserved the liberties of Europe from the Ottoman power.¹

The physical situation of the Poles was singularly ill calculated to arrest the course of these disorders. Placed on the frontiers of European civilisation; removed from the sea, or any commercial intercourse with other states, without either ranges of mountains or fortified towns, to serve as asylums in case of defeat, they had to maintain a constant and perilous war with the hordes who threatened Christendom, from the deserts of Asia. Their history is one uninterrupted series of mortal conflicts with the Muscovites, the Tartars, and the Turks; in the course of which they were repeatedly brought to the brink of ruin, and saved only by those desperate efforts which distinguish the Polish history from that of all other states in modern times. The frequency and murderous nature of these dreadful wars blighted every attempt at rural industry, and chained the nation, even in recent times, to those irregular and warlike habits which had been abandoned, centuries before, in all the other monarchies of Europe. Religious fury added grievously to these disastrous struggles, and the revolt of the Cossacks of the Ukraine, consequent on the schism between the Greek and the Catholic Church, brought the Republic to the verge of destruction, and finally led to the incorporation of their vast territory with the Muscovite dominions.²

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XVII.
1794.

¹ Rulh. i. 33,
50. Salv. i.
128, 129.

28.
Their long
and desperate
wars
with the
Asiatic
tribes.

² Rulh. i. 36,
38, 64.

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1794.

29.

And with
their Euro-
pean neigh-
bours.

Weakened in this manner in these contests with their enemies, equally by their freedom as their tyranny; knowing of liberty nothing but its licentiousness, of government but its weakness; inferior to all around them, not less in numbers than in discipline, the Poles were the only warlike nation in the world to whom victory never brought either conquests or peace. Unceasing combats with the Germans, the Hungarians, the Muscovites, the pirates of the north, all of whom regarded the republic as a common prey, fill their annals. They successively saw Bohemia, Mecklenburg, Moravia, Brandenburg, Pomerania, Silesia, the Ukraine, and Red Russia, melt away from their once mighty dominion, without ever once thinking of establishing such a steady government as might secure the various parts of their vast possessions, or restraining those ruinous democratic privileges to which the whole public disasters were owing. Incapable of foresight, they saw their neighbours daily increasing in strength, without making any effort to keep pace with their progress. Blindly attached to their customs, they adhered to them with fatal pertinacity, despite of all the lessons of experience, and were thus destined to experience to the uttermost the bitter fruits of a pitiless aristocracy and a senseless equality.¹

¹ Salv. i. 74.

30.

Their weakness early suggested the idea of dismemberment to the adjoining states.

Centuries before their partition at the close of the eighteenth century, the distracted state and experienced weakness of the Polish republic had suggested to the neighbouring powers the project of dividing its territory. Authentic documents demonstrate that this design was seriously entertained in the time of Louis XIV., and postponed only in consequence of the vast reputation, and heroic character, of John Sobieski, which prolonged the existence of the republic for a hundred years, and threw a ray of glory over its declining fortunes. Of the powers whose unworthy alliance effected the destruction of the oldest republic in the world, all had arisen out of its ruins, or been spared by its arms. Prussia, long a province of Poland, had grown out of the spoils of its ancient ruler;² Austria owed to the intervention of a Polish hero its deliverance from the sword of the Mussulman; and long before the French eagles approached the Kremlin, a Polish army had conquered Moscow; and the conflagration of that

² Salv. i. 136, and ii. 236. Rulb. 259, 260.

great capital in 1812, was but the repetition of what, five centuries before, had been effected by the vengeance of the Tartar invaders. This fearful catastrophe is thus described in the contemporary annalists. "What words can adequately paint the deplorable state to which Moscow was thus reduced! That populous capital, resplendent with riches and numbers, was annihilated in a single day. There remain only smoking ruins; piles covered with ashes and drenched with blood: You see nothing but corpses, and churches sacked or half devoured by the flames. The awful silence of death is interrupted only by the pitiable lamentations of unhappy wretches covered with wounds, a prey to all the agonies of prolonged torture." Is this the description of Moscow in 1382 or 1812—when sacked and destroyed by the Moguls or Napoleon? Singular destiny of a capital to have been twice the victim of such a catastrophe!¹

Nothing can so strongly demonstrate the wonderful power of democracy as a spring, and its desolating effects when not compressed by a firm regulator, as the history of John Sobieski. The force which this illustrious champion of Christendom could bring into the field to defend his country from Mahomedan invasion, seldom amounted to fifteen thousand men; and when, previous to the battle of Kotzim, he found himself, by an extraordinary effort, at the head of forty thousand, of whom hardly one-half were well disciplined, the unusual spectacle inspired him with such confidence, that he hesitated not to attack eighty thousand Turkish veterans, strongly intrenched, and gained the greatest victory which had been achieved by the Christian arms since the battle of Ascalon. The troops which he led to the deliverance of Vienna were no more than eighteen thousand native Poles, and the combined Christian army only numbered seventy thousand combatants; yet with this force he routed three hundred thousand Turkish soldiers; and broke the Mussulman power so effectually, that for the first time for three hundred years, the crescent of Mahomet permanently receded, and from that period historians date the decline of the Ottoman empire. Yet, after these glorious triumphs, the ancient divisions of the republic paralysed its strength; no efforts on the part of the sagacious hero could induce

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1794.

¹ Karamsin,
Hist. de
Russie, v.
101.

31.
Noble ex-
ploits of
John Sobi-
eski.

CHAP.
XCII.

1794.

1 Salv. iii.
61, and ii.
137, 141,
372, 454.
Rulh. i. 56.

the impatient nobility to submit to any burdens, in order to establish a permanent force for the public safety ; the defence of the frontiers was again intrusted to a few thousand undisciplined horsemen ; and the Polish nation incurred the disgrace of allowing its heroic king, the deliverer of Christendom, to be besieged for months, with fifteen thousand men, by innumerable hordes of barbarians, before the tardy *pospolite* would advance to his relief.¹

32.
His prophetic anticipation of the partition of Poland from its democratic divisions.

Sobieski, worn out with his ineffectual endeavours to create a regular government, or establish a permanent force for the protection of Poland, clearly foresaw the future fate of the republic. Before his accession to the throne, he had united with the primate and sixteen hundred of its principal citizens to overturn the phantom of equality with which they were perpetually opposed, and, to use his own words, "Rescue the republic from the insane tyranny of a plebeian noblesse." His reign was one incessant struggle with the principles of anarchy which were implanted in his dominions : and he at length sank under the experienced impossibility of remedying them. The aged hero, when drawing near the grave, the approach to which the ingratitude and dissensions of his subjects accelerated during his later years, expressed himself to the senate in these memorable and prophetic terms :—"He was well acquainted with the griefs of the soul who declared, that small distresses love to declare themselves, but great are silent. The world will be mute with amazement at the contemplation of us and our councils. Nature herself will be astonished ! that beneficent parent has gifted every living creature with the instinct of self-preservation, and given the most inconsiderable animals arms for their defence : we alone in the universe turn ours against ourselves. That instinct is taken from us, not by any resistless force, not by any inevitable destiny, but by a voluntary insanity, by our own passions, by the desire of mutual destruction. Alas ! what will one day be the mournful surprise of posterity to find, that from the summit of glory, from the period when the Polish name filled the universe, our country has fallen into ruins, and fallen, alas, for ever ! I have been able to gain for you victories ; but I feel myself unable to save you from yourselves.² Nothing remains to be done but to place in the hands, not of

¹ Letter, Sobieski to Louis XIV. July 14, 1692.

Rulh. i. 53.
Salv. iii. 375, 377.

destiny, for I am a Christian, but of a powerful and beneficent Deity, the fate of my beloved country. Believe me, the eloquence of your tribunes, instead of being turned against the throne, would be better directed against those who, by their disorders, are bringing down upon our country the cry of the prophet, which I, alas! hear too clearly rolling over our heads, 'yet forty years, and Nineveh will be no more.'

The anticipation of the hero was not exactly accomplished; his own glories, despite the insanity of his subjects, prolonged the existence of Poland for nearly a hundred years. But succeeding events proved every day more clearly the truth of his prediction. The conquest of the frontier town of Kamienieck from the Turks, achieved by the terror of his name after he was no more, was the last triumph of the republic. He was also its last national sovereign, and the last who possessed any estimation in the world. With him disappeared both its power and its ascendancy among other nations. From that period, successive foreign armies invaded its provinces, and invaded it never to retire. The different factions in the state, steeped in the bitterness of party strife, and exhausted by their efforts for mutual destruction, sought in the support of strangers the means of wreaking their vengeance on each other. Foreign ambition gladly acceded to the call; and under the pretence of terminating its distractions, armed one-half of the country against the other. Foreign powers soon became omnipotent in so divided a community: all hastened to place themselves under the banners of some neighbouring sovereign. By turns the Saxons, Swedes, Muscovites, Imperialists, and Prussians, ruled its destinies; Poland was no more; according to his own prophecy, it descended into the tomb with the greatest of its sons.¹

Never did a people exhibit a more extraordinary spectacle than the Poles after this period. Two factions were for ever at war; both had, to espouse and defend their interests, an army; but it was a foreign army, a conquering army, an army conquering without a combat. The inferior noblesse introduced the Saxons; the greater called in the Swedes. From the day in which Sobieski closed his eyes, strangers never ceased to reign in Poland; its national forces were continually diminishing, and at length totally

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1794.

33.*

With him
the Polish
power was
extinguish-
ed.

¹ Salv. iii.
455.

34,

Excessive
democratic
strife after
his death.

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1794.

disappeared. The reason is, that a nation without subjects is speedily exhausted; the republic at length, composed only of two hundred thousand citizens, had no more blood to shed even in civil war. No encounters thereafter took place but between the Swedish, German, or Russian forces; their struggles resembled more the judicial combat of the feudal ages than the contests of powerful nations. The factions of the republic, united on one side round the Swedish, on the other round the Saxon banners, exchanged notes and summonses like belligerent powers. By degrees blood ceased to flow; in these internal divisions gold was found more effectual than the sword; and, to the disgrace of Poland, its later years sunk under the debasement of foreign corruption.¹

¹ Salv. iii.
479. Rulh.
i. 62, 63.

35.
Increasing
weakness
and anar-
chy of the
republic.

Pursued to the grave by the phantom of equality, the dissensions of Poland became more violent as it approached its dissolution. The *liberum veto* was more frequently exercised every year; it was no longer produced by the vehemence of domestic strife, but by the influence of external corruption. That single word plunged the republic, as if by enchantment, into a lethargic sleep, and every time it was pronounced, it fell for two years into a state of absolute inanition. Faction even went so far as to dissolve the diets in their first sittings, and render their convocation a mere vain formality. All the branches of the government immediately ceased to be under any control; the treasury, the army, the civil authority, released from all superintendence, fell into a state of anarchy. Nothing similar to this ever occurred with any other people. The legislative power succeeded in destroying itself; and no other power ever ventured to supply its place. The executive, parcelled out into many independent and hostile divisions, was incapable of effecting such an usurpation; and if it had, the right of the nation to assemble in open confederation would immediately have rendered it nugatory. The prophecy of Montesquieu, as to the future destruction of the British constitution, has been accomplished in Poland; it fell when the legislative became more corrupt than the executive.²

² Rulh. i. 63.

When the adjoining states of Russia and Austria, therefore, effected the first partition of Poland, in 1792, they did not require to conquer a kingdom, but only to take each a share of a state which had fallen to pieces. The

election of Stanislaus Poniatowski, in 1764, to the throne of Poland, took place literally under the buckler; but it was not under the buckler of its own nobles, but of the Muscovite, the Cossack, and the Tartar, who overshadowed the plain of Vola with their arms; last and fatal consequence of centuries of anarchy! In vain did the Poles, taught at length by woful experience, attempt, by the advice of Czartoriski, to abandon the fatal privilege of the *liberum veto*; the despots of Russia and Prussia declared that they took the liberties of Poland, and that important right in particular, under their peculiar protection, and perpetuated a privilege which secured their conquest of the kingdom. The inferior noblesse had the madness to invoke the aid of the Empress Catherine, to maintain their ancient privileges against what they called the tyranny of the aristocracy; and Poland, invaded by the two most powerful monarchies of Europe, was deprived of the aid of the greater part of its own subjects. The higher nobility, the clergy, the real patriots, made generous efforts, but all in vain; the insane people, regardless of every thing but the maintenance of their powers, refused to second them, and one-half of Poland was lost in the struggle.¹

The terrible lesson was not received in vain. Taught by the dismemberment of their territory, what remained of Poland strove to amend their institutions; the *liberum veto* was abandoned, and the nobles themselves, taking the lead in the work of reformation, made a voluntary surrender of their privileges for the public good. The example of the French Revolution had penetrated the wilds of Sarmatia, and a new era seemed to open upon the world from its example. On the 3d May 1791, a constitution founded upon the hereditary descent of the throne, the abolition of the *liberum veto*, religious toleration, the emancipation of the bourgeois, and the progressive enfranchisement of the serfs, was proclaimed at Warsaw, amidst tears of joy from a people who hoped that they had at last found a period to their long misfortunes. The Polish reform was so different from the French, that it would seem as if it was expressly set down by Providence to afford a contrast to that bloody convulsion, and deprive the partitioning powers of a shadow even of justice in the

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1794.

36.

Which made
their parti-
tion in 1772
easy.

¹ Salv. i. 498.

37.

When too
late they
abandon
their ruin-
ous demo-
cratic privi-
leges.
Difference of
the Polish
and French
reforms.

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mournful catastrophe which followed. "In contemplating that change," says Mr Burke, "humanity has every thing to rejoice and glory in—nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to suffer. So far as it has gone, it is probably the most pure public good ever yet conferred on mankind. Anarchy and servitude were at once removed; a throne strengthened for the protection of the people, without trenching on their liberties; foreign cabal abolished, by changing the crown from elective to hereditary; a reigning king, from a heroic love to his country, exerted himself in favour of a family of strangers, as if it had been his own. Ten millions of men were placed in a way to be freed gradually, and therefore to themselves safely, not from civil or political chains, which, bad as they are, only fetter the mind, but from substantial personal bondage. Inhabitants of cities, before without privileges, were placed in the consideration which belongs to that improved and connecting situation of social life. One of the most numerous, proud, and fierce bodies of nobility in the world, was arranged only in the foremost rank of free citizens. All, from the king to the labourer, were improved in their condition; every thing was kept in its place and order, but in that place and order every thing was bettered. Not one drop of blood was spilled, no treachery, no outrage; no slander, more cruel than the sword; no studied insults on religion, morals, or manners; no spoil or confiscation, no citizen beggared, none imprisoned, none exiled; but the whole was effected with a policy, a discretion, a unanimity and secrecy, such as have never before been known on any occasion."¹ But it was too late. The powers which environed Poland were too strong, the weakness entailed on it by its long anarchy was too great, to admit of its being restored to the rank of an independent power. Like many men who discover the error of their ways when on the verge of the grave, the Poles had continued the passions of their youth down to the period when amendment is impossible and repentance fruitless. Had they abandoned their democratic contentions in the days of Sobieski, the state might have recovered its ascendancy; in the days of Catherine it was no longer practicable.²

¹ Burke, Appeal to Old Whigs—Works, vi. 244, 245.

² Salv. iii. 500, 501.

The last struggles of the Poles, like all their preceding ones, originated in their own divisions. The partisans of

the ancient anarchy revolted against the new and more stable constitution which they had recently received; they took up arms at Targowice, and invoked the aid of the Empress Catherine to restore the disorder from which she had gained so much. A second dismemberment speedily ensued, and in the distracted state of the country, it was effected without opposition. Prussia and Russia took upon themselves alone the execution of this partition, and the combined troops were in the first instance quietly cantoned in the provinces which they had seized. The Russian general Ingelstroem was stationed at Warsaw, and occupied all the inconsiderable portion of the Republic still left to Stanislaus. Soltikoff had under his orders a powerful corps in Volhynia and Podolia. Suwarroff, with a large corps, was placed at Cherson, to overawe both the Turks and the southern provinces; while a large Prussian corps was ready to support Ingelstroem, and had already seized upon the northern parts of the country. Thus Poland, divided and paralysed, without fortified towns, mountains, or defensible positions, was overrun by the armies of two of the most powerful military monarchies in Europe.¹

There is a certain degree of calamity which overwhelms the courage; but there is another, which, by reducing men to desperation, leads to the greatest and most glorious enterprises. To this latter state the Poles were now reduced. Abandoned by all the world, distracted with internal divisions, destitute alike of fortresses and resources, crushed in the grasp of gigantic enemies, the patriots of that unhappy country, consulting only their own courage, resolved to make a last effort to deliver it from its enemies. In the midst of their internal convulsions, and through all the prostration of their national strength, the Poles had never lost their individual courage, or the ennobling feelings of civil independence. They were still the redoubtable hussars who broke the Mussulman ranks under the walls of Vienna, and carried the Polish eagles in triumph to the towers of the Kremlin; whose national cry had so often made the Osmanlis tremble, and who had boasted in their hours of triumph, that if the heaven itself were to fall, they would support it on the point of their lances.² A band of patriots at Warsaw resolved at all hazards to

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1794.

38.

Commence-
ment of
their last
struggle.October 14,
1793.¹ Jom. vi.
257, 258.
Salv. iii. 501.

39.

Poles take
up arms
from de-
spair, and
elect Kos-
ciusko as a
leader.² Salv. iii.
92. Jom.,
vi. 260.

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*VII.

1794.

10.
Character of
Kosciusko,
who saw the
futility of
resistance.

attempt the restoration of their independence, and they made choice of KOSCIUSKO, who was then at Leipsic, to direct their efforts.*

This illustrious hero, who had received the rudiments of military education in France, had afterwards served, not without glory, in the ranks of independence in America. Uniting to Polish enthusiasm French ability, the ardent friend of liberty, and the enlightened advocate for order ; brave, loyal, and generous, he was in every way qualified to head the last struggle of the oldest republic in existence for its national independence. But a nearer approach to the scene of danger convinced him that the hour for action had not yet arrived. The passions, indeed, were awakened, the national enthusiasm was full, but the means of resistance were inconsiderable, and the old divisions of the Republic were not so healed as to afford the prospect of the whole national strength being exerted in its defence. But the public indignation could brook no delay ; several regiments stationed at Pultusk revolted, and moved towards Galicia ; and Kosciusko, determined not to be absent in the hour of danger, hastened to Cracow, where, on the 3d March, he closed the gates, and proclaimed the insurrection.¹

¹ *Jom. vi.*
263. *Toul.*
v. 88.

41.
He defeats
the Russians
at Ras-
lowice.
Warsaw is
taken by the
insurgents.

Having, by means of the regiments which had revolted, and the junction of some bodies of armed peasants, imperfectly armed indeed, but full of enthusiasm, collected a force of five thousand men, Kosciusko left Cracow, and

* Thadeus Kosciusko was born in 1755, of a poor but noble family, and received the first elements of his education in the corps of cadets at Warsaw. There he was early distinguished by his diligence, ability, and progress in mathematical science, insomuch that he was selected as one of the four students annually chosen at that institution to travel at the expense of the state. He went abroad, accordingly, and spent several years in France, chiefly engaged in military studies ; from whence he returned in 1778, with ideas of freedom and independence unhappily far in advance of his country at that period. As war did not seem likely at that period in the north of Europe, he set sail for America, then beginning the war of independence, and was employed by Washington as his adjutant, and distinguished himself greatly in that contest beside Lafayette, Lameth, Dumas, and so many of the other ardent and enthusiastic spirits from the Old World. He returned to Europe on the termination of the war, decorated with the order of Cincinnatus, and lived in retirement till 1789, when, as King Stanislaus was adopting some steps with a view to the assertion of the national independence, he was appointed Major-General by the Polish Diet. In 1791 he joined with enthusiasm in the formation of the Constitution which was proclaimed on the 5th May in that year, and in 1792 performed several brilliant actions under Poniatowsky, especially at Dubienka, which with four thousand men he defended during six hours against the assault of twelve thousand Russians. Stanislaus having been forced to make peace,

boldly advanced into the open country. He encountered a body of three thousand Russians at Raslowice, and after an obstinate engagement, succeeded in routing it with great slaughter. This action, inconsiderable in itself, had important consequences; the Polish peasants exchanged their scythes for the arms found on the field of battle, and the insurrection, encouraged by this first gleam of success, soon communicated itself to the adjoining provinces. In vain Stanislaus disavowed the acts of his subjects; the flame of independence spread with the rapidity of lightning, and soon all the freemen in Poland were in arms. Warsaw was the first point where the flame broke out. The intelligence of the success at Raslowice was received there on the 12th April, and occasioned the most violent agitation. For some days afterwards it was evident that an explosion was at hand; and at length, at daybreak on the morning of the 17th, the brigade of Polish guards, under the direction of their officers attacked the Governor's house and the Arsenal, and was speedily joined by the populace. The Russian and Prussian troops in the neighbourhood of the capital were about seven thousand men;² and after a prolonged and obstinate contest in the streets for thirty-six hours, they were driven across the Vistula with the loss of above three thousand men in killed and prisoners, and the flag of independence was hoisted on the towers of Warsaw.

One of the most embarrassing circumstances in the

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XVI.

1794.
April 8.

April 17.

² Jom. vi.
264, 266,
269. Lac.
xii. 269, 271.
Hard. i. 472.

he was obliged to yield to necessity, and retired to Leipsic, where he lived in seclusion till 1794, when his countrymen having resolved to make a last effort to avert entire subjugation, he was solicited to take the command, and with true patriotic devotion, albeit almost despairing of success, he set out to sacrifice himself for his country. After the battle of Maccowice, in which he was made prisoner, he was taken to St Petersburg, where he was detained in confinement for two years, until the accession of Paul, when he was set at liberty, and treated by him with great generosity. He then withdrew to England, from whence he passed over to America, where he was received with the utmost distinction, and in 1793 returned to France, where he lived in retirement, refusing all offers of command from Napoleon, whose selfish designs on Poland he early divined. To gain his services, the French emperor condescended to the baseness, in 1807, of forging his name to a proclamation to the Poles, urging them to reassert their independence, a fraud which Kosciuszko exposed in 1814, when the Allies conquered France. He continued to live in retirement in Champagne till March 1814, when the Russians found him, to their great surprise, in a small town near their headquarters. He had several interviews with the Emperor Alexander, who treated him with marks of respect, but he declined all offers of employment, and at last died at Soleure in 1817, beloved alike by his friends and his enemies.—See *Biographie Universelle*, xxii. 551, 552, and *Biog. des Contemporains*, x. 148, 149.

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XVII.

1794.

42.

Poles in the
Russian
army dis-
armed.

situation of the Russians was the presence of above sixteen thousand Poles in their ranks, who were known to sympathise strongly with these heroic efforts of their fellow-citizens. Orders were immediately dispatched to Suwarroff to assemble a corps, and disarm the Polish troops scattered in Podolia, before they could unite in any common measures for their defence. By the energy and activity of this great commander, the Poles were disarmed brigade after brigade, and above twelve thousand men reduced to a state of inaction without much difficulty—a most important operation, not only by destroying the nucleus of a powerful army, but stifling the commencement of the insurrection in Volhynia and Podolia. How different might have been the fate of Poland and Europe had they been enabled to join the ranks of their countrymen !¹

¹ Jom. vi.
271.

43.
Great ex-
ertions of
Kosciusko
and his
countrymen.

Kosciusko and his countrymen did every thing that courage or energy could suggest to put on foot a formidable force to resist their adversaries ; a provisional government was established, and in a short time forty thousand men were raised. But this force, though highly honourable to the patriotism of the Poles, was inconsiderable when compared with the vast armies which Russia and Prussia could advance for their subjugation. Small as the army was, its maintenance was too great an effort for the resources of the kingdom, which, torn by intestine faction, without commerce, harbours, or manufactures, having no national credit, and no industrious class of citizens but the Jews, now felt the fatal effects of its long career of democratic anarchy. The population of the country, composed entirely of unruly gentlemen and ignorant serfs, was totally unable at that time to furnish those numerous supplies of intelligent officers which are requisite for the formation of an efficient military force: while the nobility, however formidable on horseback in the Hungarian or Turkish wars, were less to be relied on in a contest with regular forces, where infantry and artillery constituted the great strength of the army, and courage was unavailing without the aid of science and military discipline.²

² Jom. vi.
273.

The central position of Poland, in the midst of its enemies, would have afforded great military advantages,

had its inhabitants possessed a force capable of turning it to account; that is, if they had had a hundred and fifty thousand regular troops, which the population of the country could easily have maintained, and a few well-fortified towns to arrest the enemy in one quarter, while the bulk of the national force was precipitated upon them in another. The glorious stand made by the nation in 1831, with only thirty thousand regular soldiers at the commencement of the insurrection, and no other fortifications than those of Warsaw and Modlin, proves what immense advantages this central position affords, and what opportunities it offers to military genius like that of SKRYNECKI, to inflict the most severe wounds even on a superior and well-conducted antagonist. But all these advantages were wanting to Kosciusko; and it augments our admiration of his talents, and of the heroism of his countrymen, that, with such inconsiderable means, they made so honourable a stand for their national independence.

No sooner was the King of Prussia informed of the revolution at Warsaw, than he moved forward at the head of thirty thousand men to besiege that city: while Suwarroff, with forty thousand veterans, was preparing to enter the south-eastern parts of the kingdom. Aware of the necessity of striking a blow before the enemy's forces were united, Kosciusko advanced with twelve thousand men to attack the Russian General Denisoff; but, upon approaching his corps, he discovered that it had united to the army commanded by the king in person. Unable to face such superior forces, he immediately retired, but was attacked next morning at daybreak near Sekoczyn by the Allies, and after a gallant resistance, his army was routed, and Cracow fell into the hands of the conquerors. This check was the more severely felt, as, about the same time, General Zayonscheck was defeated at Chelne, and obliged to recross the Vistula, leaving the whole country on the right bank of that river in the hands of the Russians. These disasters produced a great impression at Warsaw; the people as usual ascribed them to treachery, and insisted that the leaders should be brought to punishment; and although the chiefs escaped, several persons in an inferior situation were arrested and thrown into prison. Apprehensive of some subterfuge, if the accused were regularly

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XVII.

1794.

44.

Want of a
large regu-
lar force
proved fa-
tal to them.

45.

Russians
and Prus-
sians move
against
Warsaw,
and violent
tumults
there.

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1793.

¹ Lac. xii.
272. Jom.
vi. 274, 279.

brought to trial, the burghers assembled in tumultuous bodies, forced the prisons, erected scaffolds in the streets, and, after the manner of the assassins of September 2d, put above twelve persons to death with their own hands. These excesses penetrated with the most profound grief the pure heart of Kosciusko: he flew to the capital, restored order, and delivered over to punishment the leaders of the revolt. But the resources of the country were evidently unequal to the struggle; the paper money was at a frightful discount; and the sacrifices required of the nation were the more severely felt, that now hardly a hope of ultimate success remained.¹

46.
The invaders are compelled to raise the siege, and Suwaroff defeats a body of Poles.

The combined Russian and Prussian armies, about thirty-five thousand strong, now advanced against the capital, where Kosciusko occupied an intrenched camp with twenty-five thousand men. During the whole of July and August, the besiegers were engaged in fruitless attempts to drive the Poles into the city; and at length a great convoy, with artillery and stores for a regular siege, which was ascending the Vistula, having been captured by a gentleman named Minewsky, at the head of a body of peasants, the King of Prussia raised the siege, leaving a portion of his sick and stores in the hands of the patriots. After this success, the insurrection spread immensely, and the Poles mustered nearly eighty thousand men under arms. But they were scattered over too extensive a line of country in order to make head against their numerous enemies; a policy tempting by the prospect it holds forth of exciting an extensive insurrection, but ruinous in the end, by exposing the patriotic forces to the risk of being beaten in detail. Scarcely had the Poles recovered from their intoxication at the raising the siege of Warsaw, when intelligence was received of the defeat of Sizakowsky, who commanded a corps of ten thousand men beyond the Bug, by the Russian grand army under SUWAROFF.* This celebrated general, to whom the principal conduct of the war was now committed, followed up his successes with the utmost vigour. The retreating column was again assailed on the 19th by the victorious Russians, and, after a glorious resistance, driven into the woods between Janoff and Biala, with the loss of four thousand men and twenty-

Sept. 17.

Sept. 19.
² Hard. i.
474, 480.
Toul. 589.
Jom. vi. 283,
287

* See a biography of SUWAROFF.—*Infra*, c. xxvii. § 54.

eight pieces of cannon. Scarcely three thousand Poles, with Sizakowsky at their head, escaped into Siedlice.

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1794.

47.

Kosciusko
is routed
and made
prisoner at
Maccowice.

Upon receiving the accounts of this disaster, Kosciusko resolved, by drawing together all his detachments, to fall upon Fersen before he joined Suwarroff, and the other corps which were advancing against the capital. With this view he ordered General Poninsky to join him, and marched with all his disposable forces to attack the Russian general, who was stationed at Maccowice; but fortune on this occasion cruelly deceived the Poles. Arrived in presence of Fersen, he found that Poninsky had not yet arrived; and the Russian commander, overjoyed at this circumstance, resolved immediately to attack him. In vain Kosciusko dispatched courier after courier to Poninsky to advance to his relief. The first was intercepted by the Cossacks, and the second did not arrive in time to enable him to take a decisive part in the approaching combat. Nevertheless the Polish commander, aware of the danger of retreating with inexperienced troops in presence of a disciplined and superior enemy, determined to give battle on the following day, and drew up his little army with as much skill as the circumstances would admit. The forces on the opposite sides, in this action, which decided the fate of Poland, were nearly equal in point of numbers; but the advantages of discipline and equipment were decisively on the side of the Russians. Kosciusko commanded about ten thousand men, a great part of whom were recently raised, and imperfectly disciplined; while Fersen was at the head of twelve thousand veterans, including a most formidable body of cavalry. Nevertheless the Poles in the centre and right wing made a glorious defence; but the left, which Poninsky should have supported, having been overwhelmed by the cavalry under Denisoff, the whole army was thrown into confusion. Kosciusko, Sizakowsky, and other gallant chiefs, in vain made the most heroic efforts to rally the broken troops. They were wounded, struck down, and made prisoners by the Cossacks, who inundated the field of battle; while the remains of the army, now reduced to seven thousand five hundred men, fell back in confusion towards Warsaw.¹

Oct. 4.

¹ Toul. v. 89.
Lac. xii. 274.
Jom. vi. 291.
Bibl. Univ.
xxii. 551.
(Kosciusko.)

After the fall of Kosciusko, who sustained in his single person the fortunes of the Republic, nothing but a series

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1794.

48.
Patriots shut
themselves
up in War-
saw.

of disasters overtook the Poles. The Austrians, taking advantage of the general confusion, entered Galicia, and occupied the palatinates of Lublin and Sandomir; while Suwarroff, pressing forward towards the capital, defeated Mokronowsky, who, at the head of twelve thousand men, strove to retard the advance of that redoubtable commander. In vain the Poles made the utmost efforts; they were routed with the loss of four thousand men; and the patriots, though now despairing of success,² resolved to sell their lives dearly, and shut themselves up in Warsaw, to await the approach of the conqueror. Suwarroff was soon at the gates of Praga, the eastern suburb of that capital, where twenty-six thousand men, and one hundred pieces of cannon, defended the bridge of the Vistula and the approach to the capital. To assault such a position with forces hardly superior, was evidently a hazardous enterprise, but the approach of winter rendering it indispensable that if any thing was done at all, it should be immediately attempted, Suwarroff, who was habituated to successful assaults in the Turkish wars, resolved to storm the city. On the 2d November, the Russians made their appearance before the glacis of Praga, and Suwarroff, having in great haste completed three powerful batteries, and cannonaded the defences in breach with an imposing celerity, made his dispositions for a general assault on the following day.¹

¹ Jom. vi.
292, 295.
Toul v. 89.

49.
Storming of
Praga and
Warsaw by
Suwarroff.
Atrocious
massacre by
the Rus-
sians.
Nov. 4.

The conquerors of Ismail advanced to the attack in the same order which they had adopted on that memorable occasion. Seven columns at daybreak approached the ramparts, rapidly filled up the ditches with their fascines, broke down the defences, and, pouring into the entrenched camp, carried destruction into the ranks of the Poles. In vain the defenders did their utmost to resist the torrent. The wooden houses of Praga speedily took fire, and amidst the shouts of the victors and the cries of the inhabitants, the Polish battalions were borne backward to the edge of the Vistula. The multitude of fugitives speedily broke down the bridges; and the citizens of Warsaw beheld, with unavailing anguish, their defenders on the other side perishing in the flames, or by the sword of the conquerors. Ten thousand soldiers fell on the spot, nine thousand were made prisoners, and above twelve thousand citizens, of

every age and sex, were put to the sword—a dreadful instance of carnage, which has left a lasting stain on the name of Suwarroff, and which Russia expiated in the conflagration of Moscow. The tragedy was at an end; Warsaw capitulated two days afterwards; the detached parties of the patriots melted away, and Poland was no more. On the 6th November, Suwarroff made his triumphant entry into the blood-stained capital. King Stanislaus was sent into Russia, where he ended his days in captivity, and the final partition of the monarchy was effected.¹

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¹ *Jom. vi.*
297, 299.
Toul. v. 89,
91. *Lac.*
xii. 275.

Such was the termination of the oldest republic in existence,—such the first instance of the destruction of a member of the European family by its ambitious rivals. As such, it excited a profound sensation in Europe. The folly of preceding ages, the long period of wasting anarchy, the irretrievable defects of the Polish constitution, were forgotten; Poland was remembered only as the bulwark of Christendom against the Ottomans; she appeared only as the succouring angel under John Sobieski. To behold a people so ancient, so gallant, whose deeds were associated with such heart-stirring recollections, fall a victim to Imperial ingratitude, Prussian cupidity, and Muscovite ambition, was a spectacle which naturally excited the utmost indignation. The bloody march of the French Revolution, the disasters consequent on domestic dissension, were forgotten, and the Christian world was penetrated with a grief akin to that felt by all civilised nations at the fall of Jerusalem. The poet has celebrated these events in the immortal lines,—

50.
Great sen-
sation pro-
duced in
Europe by
the fall of
Poland.

“ Oh! bloodiest picture in the book of Time,
Sarmatia fell, unwept, without a crime;
Found not a generous friend, a pitying foe,
Strength in her arms, nor mercy in her woe!
Dropp’d from her nerveless grasp the shatter’d spear,
Closed her bright eye, and curb’d her high career;—
Hope, for a season, bade the world farewell,
And freedom shriek’d—as Kosciuszko fell!”

But the truth of history must dispel the illusion, and unfold in the fall of Poland the natural consequence of its national delinquencies. Sarmatia neither fell unwept nor without a crime; she fell the victim of her own dissensions; of the chimera of equality insanely pursued, and the rigour of aristocracy unceasingly maintained; of

51.
It was the
victim of
democratic
madness and
oppression.

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extravagant jealousy of every superior, and merciless oppression of every inferior rank. The eldest born of the European family was the first to perish, because she had thwarted all the ends of the social union; because she united the turbulence of democracy to the exclusion of aristocratic societies; because she exhibited the vacillation of a republic without its energy, and the oppression of a monarchy without its stability. Such a system neither could nor ought to be maintained. The internal feuds of Poland were more fatal to human happiness than the despotism of Russia, and the growth of improvement among its people as slow as among the ryots of Hindostan.

52.
Real cause
of the ruin
of Poland.

To any one who has either studied in history; or experienced in real life, the practical working of the principle of self-government among mankind, in situations where democratic equality is really established, the destruction of Poland will appear so far from surprising, that the only wonderful thing is, that her people so long succeeded in maintaining their independence. It is the fretting against control, the "ignorant impatience of taxation" in mankind, when practically entrusted with self-government, which was the real cause of the calamity. No lessons of experience however severe, no calls of patriotism however urgent, no warnings of wisdom however emphatic, could induce its plebeian noblesse to submit to any present burden to avert future disaster. Like the Americans at this time, who refuse in many States, at all hazards to their public credit, to tax themselves to defray the interest of their State's debt, they preferred "any load of infamy however great, to any burden of taxation however light."¹ So strong is this disinclination to submit to present burdens to prevent future evil, among men in all ages and countries, that it may fairly be considered as insurmountable; and therefore any society in which supreme power is really vested in the people, bears in itself the seeds of early ruin. Democratic bodies often exhibit extraordinary energy, if they can derive their resources from foreign plunder or domestic confiscation; but they will never, except in the last extremity, burden themselves. Real self-taxation is in truth a delusive theory: where it is attempted to be put in practice it invariably fails; what was so long mistaken for it was the taxing of one class by

¹ Sidney
Smith.

another class—of the many by the few. These are unpalatable truths—but they are not the less truths ; nor is it less on that account the duty of the historian to state them. If any one doubts their accuracy, let him contemplate the abandonment of the Sinking Fund, since popular influence began to predominate in Great Britain, and the recent repudiation of the States' debt by a large part of the American people.

In this respect the history of Muscovy presents a striking and instructive contrast to that of Poland. Commencing originally with a smaller territory, yet further removed from the light of civilisation, cut off in a manner from the intelligence of the globe, decidedly inferior in its earlier contests, the growth of Russia has been as steady as the decline of Poland. The Polish republic fell at length beneath a power which it had repeatedly vanquished, whose capital it had conquered ; and its name was erased from the list of nations at the very time that its despotic rival had attained the zenith of power and glory. These facts throw a great and important light on the causes of early civilisation, and the form of government adapted to a barbarous age. There cannot in such a state be so great a misfortune as a weak, there cannot be so great a blessing as a powerful government. No oppression is so severe as that which is there inflicted by the members of the same state on each other ; no anarchy so irremediable as that which originates in the violence of their own passions. To restrain the fury, and coerce the dissensions of its subjects, is the first duty of government in such periods ; in its inability to discharge this duty, is to be found the real cause of the weakness of a democratic, in the rude but effective performance of it, the true secret of the strength of a despotic state.

Such, however, are the ennobling effects of the spirit of freedom in its wildest form, that the remnant of the Polish nation, albeit bereft of a country by their own insanity, have by their deeds commanded the respect, and by their sorrows obtained the sympathy of the world. The remains of Kosciusko's bands, disdaining to live under Muscovite oppression, sought and found an asylum in the armies of France ; they served with distinction both in Italy and Spain, and awakened by their bravery that sympathy,

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53.
Striking
contrast
afforded by
the steady
growth of
Russia.

54.
Gallant
spirit of the
exiled Polish
bands.

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which, with other and more selfish motives, brought the Conqueror of Europe to the walls of the Kremlin. Like the remains of a noble mind borne down by suffering, they have exhibited flashes of greatness even in the extremity of disaster; and while wandering without a home, from which their own madness or that of their fathers had banished them, obtained a respect, to which their conquerors were often strangers at the summit of their glory. Such is the effect even of the misdirected spirit of freedom; it dignifies and hallows all that it encircles, and even amidst the ruins which it has occasioned, exalts the human soul!

55.
Comparison
of Polish
with Eng-
lish history.

The history of England has illustrated the beneficial effects which have resulted to its character and institutions from the Norman Conquest. In the severe suffering which followed that great event, in the anguish of generations, were laid the deep and firm foundations of English freedom. In the checkered and disastrous history of Poland may be traced the consequences of an opposite, and, at first sight, more fortunate destiny; of national independence uninterruptedly maintained, and purity of race unceasingly preserved. The first, in the school of early adversity, were taught the habits and learned the wisdom necessary for the guidance of maturer years; the second, like the spoiled child whose wishes had never been coerced, nor its passions restrained, at last acquired on the brink of the grave, prematurely induced by excessive indulgence, that experience which should have been gained in earlier years. It is through this terrible, but necessary ordeal, that Poland is now passing; and the experience of ages would indeed be lost, if we did not discern in its present suffering the discipline necessary for future happiness, and in the extremity of temporary disaster, the severe training for ultimate improvement.

56.
Just retri-
bution on
the parti-
tioning
powers.

The partition of Poland, and scandalous conduct of the states who reaped the fruit of injustice in its fall, has been the frequent subject of just indignation and eloquent complaint from the European historians; but the connexion between that calamitous event and the subsequent disasters of the partitioning powers, has not hitherto met with due attention. Yet nothing can be clearer, than that it was this iniquitous measure which brought all the misfortunes that followed upon the European monarchies; that it

was it which opened the gates of Germany to French ambition, and brought Napoleon with his terrible legions to Vienna, Berlin, and the Kremlin. The more the campaigns of 1793 and 1794 are studied, the more clearly does it appear that it was the prospect of obtaining a share in the partition of Poland which paralysed the allied arms, which intercepted and turned aside the legions which might have overthrown the Jacobin rule, and created that jealousy and division amongst their rulers, which, more even than the energy of the Republicans, contributed to their uniform and astonishing success. Had the redoubtable bands of Catherine been added to the armies of Prussia in the plains of Champagne in 1792, or to those of Austria and England in the fields of Flanders in 1793, not a doubt can remain but that the revolutionary party would have been overcome, and a constitutional monarchy established in France, with the entire concurrence of three-fourths of all the respectable classes in the kingdom, and to the infinite present and future blessing of its whole inhabitants. Even in 1794, by a cordial co-operation of the Prussian and Austrian forces after the fall of Landrecy, the whole barrier erected by the genius of Vauban might have been captured, and the Revolution, thrown back upon its own resources, been permanently prevented from proving dangerous to the liberties of Europe. What, then, paralysed the allied armies in the midst of such a career of success, and caused the campaign to close under circumstances of such general disaster? The prospect of partitioning Poland, which first retained the Prussian battalions, during the crisis of the campaign, in sullen inactivity on the Rhine, and then led to the precipitate and indignant abandonment of Flanders by the Austrian forces.

The subsequent fate of the partitioning powers is a striking instance of that moral retribution, which, sooner or later, in nations as well as individuals, attends a flagrant act of injustice. To effect the destruction of Poland, Prussia paralysed her armies on the Rhine, and threw on Austria and England the whole weight of the contest with Republican France. She thereby permitted the growth of its military power, and the battle of Jena, the treaty of Tilsit, and six years of bondage, were the consequence. Suwarroff entered Warsaw when its spires were yet gleam-

57.
Their subsequent
punishment.

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1794.

ing with the fires of Praga, and when the Vistula ran red with Polish blood ; and before twenty years had expired, a Polish army revenged on the Moskwa that inhuman massacre, and the sack of Warsaw was forgotten in the conflagration of Moscow. Austria withdrew from Flanders to join in the deed of iniquity, and secure in Galicia the fruits of injustice ; and twice did the French guards in consequence pass in triumph through the walls of Vienna. The connexion between this great and guilty act and the subsequent disasters of the spoliating powers, therefore, is direct and evident ; and history would be worse than useless if it did not signalise that great instance of just retribution for the eternal warning and instruction of mankind. Already has been realised the anticipation of the poet :—

“ Yes ! thy proud lords, unpitied land, shall see
That man hath yet a soul, and dare be free !
A little while, along thy saddening plains,
The starless night of desolation reigns ;
Truth shall restore the light by nature given,
And, like Prometheus, bring the fire of heaven.
Prone to the dust oppression shall be hurl'd,
Her name, her nature, wither'd from the world ! ” •

• *Pleasures of Hope.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

CAMPAIGN OF 1795.

THE great successes which in every quarter had signalised the conclusion of the campaign of 1794, led early in the following year to the dissolution of the confederacy against the French Republic. The conquest of Holland determined the wavering policy of Prussia. Early in January conferences were publicly opened at Bâle, and before the end of the month the preliminaries were signed. The public articles of this treaty bound the King of Prussia to live on friendly terms with the Republic, and not furnish succour to its enemies—to concede to France the undisturbed enjoyment of its conquests on the left bank of the Rhine, leaving the equivalent to be given to Prussia to ulterior arrangement; while, on the other hand, the French government engaged to withdraw its troops from the Prussian possessions on the right bank, and not treat as enemies the states of the empire in which Prussia took an interest. By the secret articles, “the King of Prussia engaged not to undertake any hostile enterprise against Holland, or any country occupied by the French troops;” an indemnity was stipulated for Prussia, in the event of France extending her frontier to the Rhine: the Republic promised not to carry hostilities in the empire beyond a fixed line, and in case of the Rhine being permanently fixed on as the boundary of France, and including the states of Deux Ponts, the Republic engaged to undertake a debt of 1,500,000 rix-dollars, due to Prussia by that potentate.¹

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1.

Peace
between
France and
Prussia.
Jan. 22

¹ Hard. iii.
144-146.
Martens,
vi. 45.

There was in truth no present interest at variance

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2.
Effects of
the suc-
cesses of
France in the
preceding
campaign.

between these powers, and the treaty contained little more of importance than a recognition of the Republic by Frederick William ; but there never was a step more ultimately ruinous taken by a nation. The conquest of Holland, which overturned the balance of power, and exposed Prussia uncovered to the attacks of France, should have been the signal for a sincere coalition, such as that which had coerced the ambition of Louis XIV., and subsequently overturned the power of Napoleon. What a succession of disasters would such a decided conduct in all probability have prevented ; what long and disastrous a prodigious effusion of human blood ; what efforts did it require for Prussia to regain in 1813 the position which she occupied in 1795 ! But these events were buried in the womb of fate ; no one then anticipated the coming disasters ; and the Prussian ministers deemed themselves fortunate in escaping from a war in which no real interest of the monarchy seemed to be at stake. They concluded peace accordingly ; they left Austria to contend single-handed with the power of France ; and the battle of Jena, and treaty of Tilsit, were the consequence.¹*

¹ Jom. vii.
6. Th. vii.
202.

3.
State of the
Empire.
Oct. 1794.
Treaty be-
tween Hol-
land and
France.

The disunited and unwieldy mass of the empire, without altogether discontinuing military operations, pursued them in so languid a manner as to be equivalent to a complete pacification. Bavaria, the Elector of Mayence, and several other powers, issued a declaration, that the states of the Empire had not taken up arms but for the protection of the states adjoining Alsace, and that they

* The British historian need not hesitate to express this opinion, since it is not only agreeable to that of all the German annalists, but expressly admitted by the able and candid Prussian statesman who concluded with Barthélemy, on the part of the Directory, that unhappy pacification. "The King of Prussia," says Prince Hardenberg, "tired of warlike operations, rudely awakened from his dreams on the plains of Champagne, and deeming a counter revolution in France impossible, said to his ministers : 'Arrange matters as you like, provided you extricate me from the war with France.'" By signing the treaty of Bâle, he abandoned the House of Orange, sacrificed Holland, laid open the empire to French invasion, and prepared the ruin of the ancient Germanic constitution. Despising the lessons of history, that Prince forgot that no sooner was the independence of Holland menaced, in the end of the seventeenth century, than a league of all the sovereigns of Europe was formed to restrain the ambition of Louis XIV. ; while at this time the invasion of the same country, effected under the Republican banners, led to a dissolution of the coalition of Kings against the French Revolution. From that moment every throne was stripped of the magic halo which heretofore had surrounded it. Accident merely prevented the treaty of Bâle from being followed by a general revolution in Europe.

had no inclination to interfere in the internal affairs of France. Spain, exhausted and dejected, awaited only the most favourable opportunity of making a separate peace, and concluding a contest from which she had already suffered so much ; while Piedmont, crushed by the weight of armaments beyond its power to support, which cost more than three times the subsidies granted by England, equally desired a conclusion to hostilities without venturing to express the wish. The conquest of Holland relieved the French government of all anxiety in that quarter, by compelling the Dutch to conclude an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the Republic. The principal conditions of that treaty were, that the United Provinces ceded Venloo and Maestricht to Belgium ; and bound themselves to aid the French with twelve ships of the line, and eighteen frigates, and one-half of the troops which they had under arms.¹

Thus the whole weight of the war fell on Austria and England. The former of these powers had suffered too much by the loss of the Low Countries to permit her to think of peace, while the disasters she had experienced had not as yet been so great as to compel her to renounce the hope of regaining them. Mr Pitt in the latter was fully aware of the approaching danger, and indefatigable in his efforts to revive the confederacy. He met with a worthy ally in Thugut, who directed the Cabinet of Vienna. On the 4th May 1795, a treaty offensive and defensive was concluded between the two powers, by which Austria engaged to maintain 200,000 men in the field during the approaching campaign,² and England to

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1795.

Dec. 25,
1794.

¹ Jom. vii.
8, 16, 18.
Th. vii. 203
Martens.

4.
Fresh treaty
between
Austria and
England.

May 4, and
20.
² Jom. vii.
15, 16. Parl.
Hist. xxxii.
576. Mar-
tens, vi. 65.

Had Frederick William been animated with the spirit of Frederick the Great, he would have negotiated with the olive branch in one hand and the sword in the other : and, supporting Holland, he would even have included it in the line of his military protection. By so doing, he would have risen to the rank not only of the mediator, but the arbiter of Europe, and been enabled to aspire to the glorious mission of balancing the dominion of the seas against continental despotism. Whereas, the peace of Bâle, concluded in narrow views, and without any regard to the common cause, destroyed the personal character of Frederick William, and stript the Prussian monarchy of its glorious reputation. We may add, that if, ten years afterwards, Prussia was precipitated in the abyss, it is to be imputed to its blind and obstinate adherence to the system of neutrality, which commenced with the treaty of Bâle. No one felt this more deeply, or expressed it more loudly, than the Prussian diplomatist who concluded that pacification."—PRINCE HARDENBERG'S *Memoirs*, iii. 150, 151. These able Memoirs, though written by the Count D'Allonville, were compiled from Prince Hardenberg's papers.

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5.
Efforts of
England to
maintain
the war.
Land and
sea forces,
and supplies,
and treaty
with Russia.

¹ New Ann.
Reg. p. 31,
33, 45, 49.

Feb. 18.

² New Ann.
Reg. 31, 33,
45, 49. Jom.
vii. 11, 17.
Martens,
vi. 11.

6.
Arguments
in England
against the
war.

furnish a subsidy of £6,000,000 sterling. The utmost efforts were at the same time made to reinforce the Imperial armies on the Rhine.

The British government made exertions for the prosecution of the war more considerable than they had yet put forth, and seemed sensible that the national strength required to be more fully exerted now that the war approached her own shores. The naval force was augmented to 100,000 seamen, one hundred and eighty ships of the line were put in commission, and the land forces raised to 150,000 men. The expenditure of the year, exclusive of the interest of the national debt, amounted to £27,500,000, of which £18,000,000 was raised by loan, and £3,500,000 by exchequer bills. New taxes to the amount of £1,600,000 were imposed,¹ and notwithstanding the most vehement debates on the conduct of Administration, and the original expedience of the war, a large majority in Parliament concurred in the necessity, now that we were embarked in the contest, of prosecuting it with vigour. On the 18th February, an alliance offensive and defensive was concluded between Great Britain, Austria, and Russia. This important event, the first step towards the great and decisive share which the last-mentioned power ultimately took in the contest, was not, however, at first productive of any results. The Empress Catherine, whose attention was wholly engrossed in securing the immense territories which had fallen to her by the partition of Poland, merely sent a fleet of twelve ships of the line, and eight frigates, to reinforce Admiral Duncan, who was cruising in the North Seas, to blockade the squadron recently acquired by France from the Dutch Republic; but neither had any opportunity of measuring their strength with the enemy.²

A powerful and energetic party in England still disclaimed against the war as unjust and unnecessary, and viewed with secret complacency the triumphs of the Republican forces. A secret belief that the cause of France was at bottom their own, led them to desire its success. It was urged in Parliament, that the revolutionary government in France being now overturned, and one professing moderation installed in its stead, the great object of the war was in fact at an

end: that the continued disasters of the Allies proved the impossibility of forcing a government on that country contrary to the inclination of its inhabitants: that the confederacy was now in fact dissolved, and the first opportunity should therefore be seized to conclude a contest from which no rational hopes of success any longer remained: that if we continued fighting till the Bourbons were restored, it was impossible to see any end to the contest, or to the burden which would be imposed upon England during its continuance: that nothing but disaster had hitherto been experienced in the struggle; and if that was the case formerly, when all Europe was arrayed against the Republic, what might now be expected when England and Austria alone were left to continue the struggle, and the French power extended from the Pyrenees to the Texel? that every consideration of safety and expedience, therefore, recommended the speedy close of a contest, of doubtful policy in its commencement, and more than doubtful justice in its principles.¹

Mr Pitt replied,—The object of the war was not to force the people of France to adopt any particular form of government, but merely to secure their neighbours from their aggression; although there was great reason to fear that no security could be found for this till a monarchy was restored in that country, yet it was no part of the allied policy to compel its adoption: the government of the French Republic was changed in form only, and not in spirit, and was as formidable as when the war was first provoked by the declamations of the Girondists: hostilities would again be commenced as soon as the military power of their enemies was dissolved, and the Allies would then find it as difficult a matter to reassemble their forces, as the French would now find it to dissolve theirs. It is highly improbable that the Republican government will be able to induce men accustomed to war and rapine to return to the peaceful occupations of life; and much more likely that they will find it necessary to employ them in schemes of ambition and plunder, to prevent them from turning their arms against domestic authority. War, however costly, at least gives to England security, and it would be highly impolitic to exchange this for the peril necessarily consequent upon a resumption of amicable relations with a country in such

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1795.

¹ Mr Fox and Mr Wilberforce's Speeches. New Ann. Reg. 13, 14. Parl. Deb. xxxii. 231, 242.

7.
Mr Pitt's reply.

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a state of political contagion. Peace would at once prove destructive to the French West India Islands, by delivering them over to anarchy and Jacobinism, and from them the flame of servile revolt would speedily spread to our own colonial possessions in that quarter. Notwithstanding the great successes of the French on the Continent, the balance of conquest in the contest with 'England is decidedly in favour of this country: the losses of the Republicans in wealth and resources have been greater since the beginning of the war than those of all the Allies put together: the forced requisitions and assignats of the French, which have hitherto maintained the contest, cannot be continued without the severities of the Reign of Terror; and now is the time, by vigorously continuing the contest, to compel the Directory to augment their redundant paper currency, and thus accelerate the ruin which it is evident such a system must sooner or later bring on the financial resources of the country.¹

¹ New Ann.
Reg. p. 16,
17. Parl.
Deb. xxxii.
242, 251.

8.
Great in-
crease in the
patriotic
spirit of the
people:

The internal feeling of England, notwithstanding the continued ill success of its arms on the Continent, was daily becoming more unanimous in favour of the war. The atrocities of the Jacobins had moderated the ardour of many of the most enlightened of their early friends, and confirmed the hostility of almost all the moral and religious as well as opulent and influential classes; the spectacle of the numerous and interesting emigrant families who had been reduced from the height of prosperity to utter destitution, awakened the compassion of the humane over the whole country; while the immense successes of the Republicans, and, above all, the occupation of Holland, excited the hereditary and ill-extinguished jealousy of the English people of their ancient rivals. Although, therefore, the division of parties continued most vehement, and the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act still invested the government with extraordinary powers, yet the feeling of the country was gradually becoming more united, and its passions, like those of a combatant who has been wounded in the strife, were waxing warmer with all the blood which it had lost.²

² Ann. Reg.
p. 31, 42.

In France, on the other hand, the exhaustion consequent upon a state of extraordinary and unparalleled exertion was rapidly beginning to display itself. The system of

the Convention had consisted in spending the capital of the country by means of confiscations, forced loans, and military requisitions : and the issue of assignats, supported by the Reign of Terror, had, beyond all former example, carried their designs into effect. But all such violent means of obtaining supplies, can, from their very nature, only be temporary—how great soever may be the accumulated wealth of a state, it must in time be exhausted, if not supplied by the continued labours of private industry. The Reign of Terror, by stopping all the efforts of individuals to better their condition, and paralysing the arms of labour over the whole country, dried up the sources of national wealth ; even had the fall of Robespierre not put a period to the violent means adopted for rendering it available to the state, the same result must soon have followed from the cessation of all the sources of its supply.¹

During the winter of 1794, the French government made the greatest exertions to put their navy on a respectable footing, but all their efforts on that element led to nothing but disaster. Early in March the Toulon fleet, consisting of thirteen ships of the line, put to sea with the design of expelling the English squadron from the Gulf of Genoa, and landing an expedition in Corsica. Being ignorant of their intention, Lord Hotham, who commanded the English blockading fleet, was at Leghorn at the time, and they succeeded in capturing the Berwick, of seventy-four guns, in the Gulf of St Florent, which found itself surrounded by the French fleet before its crew were aware it had put to sea. But the British admiral was not long in taking his revenge. On the 7th March he set sail from Leghorn with thirteen line-of-battle ships, and on the 13th fell in with the French squadron of the same force. By a skilful manœuvre he succeeded in cutting off two ships of the line, the *Ca Ira* and the *Censeur*, which fell into the hands of the British ; and the remainder of the fleet, after a severe but partial action, was compelled to fall back to the Isles de Hyeres, and disembark the land troops which they had on board. By this vigorous stroke the object of the expedition in the recovery of Corsica was entirely frustrated ;² and such was the dismay with which the soldiers were inspired from their sufferings during its continuance, that out of eighteen thousand men who were originally

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1795.

9.

Exhausted
state of
France.¹ Mig. ii.
402. Th.
vii. 433.
Jom. vii.
56.10.
Naval opera-
tions in the
Mediterranean.
Combat of
La Spezia.

March 13.

² James'
Naval Hist.
ii. 81, 92
Ann. Reg.
p. 138. Jo n
vii. 72, 74.

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11.
War in the
Maritime
Alps.

embarked, only ten thousand reached the French army, then lying in the Marquisate of Oneille.

Meanwhile the courts of Vienna and of Turin were making the most vigorous efforts for the prosecution of the war on the Piedmontese frontier. The Austrians reinforced the King of Sardinia with fifteen thousand men, and the Piedmontese troops raised the effective force in the field to fifty thousand men. The French troops on that frontier were in a still greater state of destitution and misery than the army of the Rhine. From the effect of desertion and sickness, during the severe winter of 1794, amidst the inhospitable region of the Alps, the total effective forces on that frontier did not exceed forty-five thousand. They occupied the whole crest of the mountains, from Vado to the Little St Bernard, while eighteen thousand of the allied forces were stationed in front of Cairo, fifteen thousand near Ceva, ten thousand in the valleys of Stura and Suza, and six thousand on the lofty ridges which close the upper extremity of the valley of Aosta. Generally speaking, the Republicans were perched on the summits of the mountains, while the Piedmontese forces occupied the narrow defiles where they sunk down into the Italian plains.¹

¹ Toul. v.
293, Jom.
vii. 76, 78,
80.

2.
First opera-
tions of the
Allies,
which are
successful,
and dangers
of the
French.
May 12.

June 20.

June 26.

The campaign commenced by a well-concerted enterprise of the French against the Col Dumont, near Mont Cenis, which the Piedmontese occupied with a force of two thousand men, from whence they were driven with considerable loss. But shortly afterwards, Kellerman having been obliged to weaken his right by large detachments, to suppress a revolt at Toulon, the Imperialists resolved to take the lead by offensive operations against the French forces stationed in the Maritime Alps. For this purpose a simultaneous attack was made on the Republican posts at St Giacomo, Bardinetto, and Vado, which were all fortified. Though the French gained an advantage at the Col di Tende, their line was forced back after several days' fighting, and the Republicans were obliged to evacuate all their positions in the Maritime Alps. The allied forces occupied Loano, Finale, and Voltri, with the whole magazines and artillery which had been collected there, and threatened the country of Nice, and the territory of the Republic. Had the allied generals pushed their advantages with vigour,

the whole right wing of the French army might have been driven from the mountains, or destroyed ; for they could have collected thirty thousand fresh troops, flushed with victory, to crush twenty thousand, harassed with fatigue, destitute of shoes, and literally starving. Kellerman, with the aid of his chief of the staff, Berthier, exerted the utmost degree of skill and ability to compensate the inferiority of their force ; but it was with the greatest difficulty, and only by pledging their private credit for the supplies of the army, that they were enabled either to procure provisions for the troops, or inspire them with the resolution to defend the rugged and desolate ridge in which the contest was carried on. Their situation was rendered the more desperate, by an unsuccessful naval action between the British and Toulon fleets in the bay of Frejus, in the course of which the Alcide, of seventy-four guns, blew up ; and the French squadron, severely shattered, was compelled to take refuge in the harbour of Toulon. Fortunately for the Republicans, divisions between the allied generals at this time paralysed their movements, and prevented them from following up those advantages which their recent successes and the open communication with the English fleet seemed to afford.¹

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1795.

¹ *Jom. vii.*
98, 101.
Toul. v. 293,
297, 300.

These disasters on the frontiers of Provence induced the government to detach seven thousand men from the army of the Eastern Pyrenees, and ten thousand men from the army of the Rhine, to reinforce the combatants on the Alps. Their arrival, towards the end of August, restored the superiority to the Republican side, while no corresponding addition was made to the forces of the allied generals—another proof, among the many which these campaigns afford, of the total want of concert which prevailed between the Allies on the vast circle of operations from the Rhine to the Mediterranean, and the inestimable advantages which the French derived from the unity of government, and interior line of communication, which they enjoyed. The consequences soon proved ruinous to the allied armies. Kellerman, enabled by this powerful reinforcement to resume the offensive, and encouraged by the evident discord between the allied generals, formed the design of separating the Sardinian from the Austrian forces by a concentrated attack upon the centre of their line, and

13.
French
armies
strongly
reinforced,
and resume
the offen-
sive.

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compelling the latter to give battle alone in the valley of Loano. But before this plan could be carried into effect, the peace with Spain enabled the government to detach to the support of the army of Italy the army of the Eastern Pyrenees, which arrived in the Maritime Alps before the end of September, and the command of the whole was given to General Scherer, Kellerman being detached to the command of the forces in Savoy. This great addition rendered the Republicans nearly double the allied forces in that quarter; while the Courts of Turin and Vienna took no steps to avert the storm preparing to burst upon their heads. In truth, the Piedmontese government, experiencing the fate of all weak states in alliance with powerful ones, began to be as jealous of its friends as its enemies; while the Imperial generals rendered it too evident, by their manner and conduct, that they had no confidence either in the sincerity of the government, or the efficiency of their soldiers. Devins trusted for his support not to the strength of the mountains which he occupied, but to the co-operation of the English fleet in the Bay of Genoa; a signal error which soon led to the most disastrous consequences.¹

¹ *Jom.* vii.
280, 293,
294, 297.
Toul. v. 301.

14.
Prepara-
tions for the
battle of
Loano.

The Austrian army, consisting of forty thousand men, was posted in an extensive and fortified position, having its left resting on the little seaport town of Loano, and its right extending to the summit of the impending heights to the northward, from whence it communicated by a chain of fortified posts with the strong places of Ceva, Mondovi, and Coni, held by the Piedmontese troops. Their position was strong; but it was balanced by the circumstance, that in case of disaster the left wing had no means of retreat. The Republicans occupied a position in front of their opponents, their right resting on the little village of Borghetto on the sea-coast, their left extending to the Col di Tende and the summits of the Maritime Alps. The army at first consisted only of thirty-seven thousand men, but it was raised by the successive arrival of the columns from the Eastern Pyrenees, before the middle of November, to sixty thousand men. Massena,* who had acquired a remarkable knowledge of the localities of that rugged district during the preceding campaigns, and whose

* See a biography of MASSENA, *Infra*, c. xx. § 49.

great military abilities had already become conspicuous, was intrusted with the command of the attack. Notwithstanding the vast accession of force which the Republicans had received, and the increased activity which they had for some time evinced, the Austrian commander was so little aware of his danger that he lay at La Pietra, detained by an abscess in his mouth, while his officers were chiefly assembled at Feriole, where they were roused from a ball by the sound of the French cannon, at six o'clock on the morning of the 23d November.

Scherer, the general-in-chief, commanded the right wing, Augereau the centre, and Serrurier the left. Massena's design was to force the Austrian centre with an overwhelming force, and from that vantage-ground to take the remainder of the line in flank and rear. After haranging his troops he led them to the assault. The Austrian centre, commanded by Argenteau, made an obstinate resistance at the posts of Bardinetto and Melogno, and drove back the first assailants; but such was the vehemence of the fresh columns which the Republicans brought up to the assault, that they were compelled at length to retire to a second line on the right bank of the Bormida. Massena soon forced that position also, and by so doing, got into the interior of the Austrian line, and was able to take all their positions in rear. The result of this first day's combat was, that the centre of the Allies being forced, their left wing was liable to be overwhelmed by the combined attacks of the French centre and right wing. No sooner was the Austrian general made sensible of this disaster, than he took the most precipitate steps to draw back his right wing. But he was not permitted to do this without sustaining the greatest losses. By break of day Augereau was climbing the heights of the Apennines, while his victorious battalions were driving every thing before them. In conducting their retreat, the Imperialists did not display the vigour or decision which could alone save them in such perilous circumstances, and which, on the preceding day, had extricated the division commanded by Roccahini from equal danger.²

The consequence was, that they were beset on all sides in a ravine, which formed their only line of retreat; the head of the column, seized with a panic, was driven back

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¹ Jom. vii.
298, 309.
Toul. v. 378,
379.

15.
Commence-
ment of the
action.

Nov. 23.

² Toul. v.
379, 381.
Jom. vii.
310, 315.

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16.

Disastrous
retreat of
the Allies,
and its de-
cisive con-
sequences.

upon the centre, and thrown into utter confusion ; and in the midst of an unparalleled scene of carnage and horror, forty-eight pieces of cannon, and one hundred caissons, were abandoned. The other column of the right wing only escaped by betaking themselves to almost inaccessible paths, and abandoning all their artillery, and at length, with great difficulty, effected their retreat by the road of the Corniche. Five thousand prisoners, eighty pieces of cannon, and an immense quantity of ammunition and magazines, fell into the hands of the victors ; the total loss on the side of the Austrians was not less than seven thousand, while that of the French hardly amounted to one thousand men. This great victory, which terminated the campaign of 1795 in the Alps, was of decisive importance to the Republic. It gave the French winter-quarters at Loano, Savona, Vado, and other places on the Italian side of the Apennines, and by rendering them masters of the valleys of the Orba, the Bormida, and the Tanaro, afforded every facility, at the commencement of the following campaign, for achieving the great object of separating the Austrian from the Piedmontese troops. In Savoy, the early fall of the snows precluded active operations at that rigorous season ; but the French continued to occupy their elevated position on the summits of the ridge of Mont Genevre, Mont Cenis, and the Little St Bernard.¹

¹ Jom. vii.
316, 324.
Toul. v. 380,
383.

17.
Tactics by
which the
battle was
gained by
the Repub-
licans.

This battle, the most decisive yet gained from the commencement of the war by the Republican forces, is well deserving of consideration. It was the first instance of the successful application by the French troops of those principle of strategy which were afterwards carried to such perfection by Napoleon. It is the first victory in which a decisive advantage was gained, where the strength of the adverse army was at once broken by the number of prisoners and artillery which were taken. The same principle which the English adopted under Rodney and Howe, that of breaking the line, and falling with an overwhelming force upon one wing, was here carried into execution with decisive effect. It is worthy of observation, that this system was thus fully understood, and practically exemplified, by Massena, before Napoleon ever had the command of an army ; another proof among the many which exist, that even the greatest genius cannot by more

than a few years anticipate the lights of the age. Such a plan is the natural result of conscious prowess, and an experienced superiority in combat, which leads the attacking force to throw itself, without hesitation, into the midst of the enemy's columns. It will never be adopted but by the party by which such a superiority is felt; it will never be successful but where such a superiority exists.

The war on the Spanish frontier, during this campaign, was speedily brought to a successful termination. In the Western Pyrenees, the Republicans, during the winter, had sustained the greatest losses from sickness: no less than twelve thousand men had perished in the hospitals since the troops went into their cantonments, and twenty-five thousand were still sick; only twenty-five thousand, out of a nominal force of sixty thousand, were in a condition to take the field, and they having long been reduced to half a ration a-day, looked more like spectres than men. It was not till the beginning of June that the Republican forces were so much strengthened, by reinforcements from the interior, as to be able to take the field. The fall of Figueras and Rosas gave the French a secure base for their operations in Catalonia; but the operations there, though upon the whole successful, were not of any decisive importance. The Spanish army in that quarter was stationed on the river La Fluvia. Several combats of inconsiderable importance took place, the most remarkable of which was that of Bezalu, where Augereau, with a small force, defeated all the efforts of the Spanish army. The opposing armies were still on the Fluvia when the treaty of peace between the two powers suspended all further hostilities.¹

It was in Biscay that the decisive action took place which hastened this important event. Twelve thousand men detached from the army of La Vendée, and replaced in that quarter by the troops who had been engaged in the reduction of Luxembourg, at length put the French commander in a condition to take the field. Towards the end of June, the campaign commenced by an unsuccessful attempt of the French upon the corps commanded by Felangieri; but in the beginning of July, Moncey forced the passage of the river Deva, and by a vigorous attack

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18.
War in
Spain.
Indecisive
operations
in Cata-
lonia.

¹ Jom. vii.
104, 110, 116.
Toul. v. 218,
221.

19.
Great suc-
cesses of the
Republicans
in Biscay,
and treaty
of Bâle with
Spain.
June 25.

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July 17.

with his centre, succeeded in dividing the Spanish army into two parts, and interposing a hostile force between them. General Crespo, who commanded the Spanish left, was so vigorously pursued by the Republicans, that he was compelled to abandon both Bilboa and Vittoria, and found himself driven to the frontiers of Old Castile, with a force reduced by the sword and desertion to seven thousand men. The left wing of the invading army was not so successful; and preparations were making for the investment of Pampeluna, when hostilities were terminated by the intelligence of the treaty of Bâle, concluded on the 12th July between the hostile powers. By this treaty Spain recognised the French Republic, and ceded to France the Spanish half of the island of St Domingo; an acquisition more embarrassing than valuable, in the state of anarchy to which the precipitate measures for the emancipation of the negroes had reduced that once flourishing colony. In return, the Republic relinquished all its conquests in Europe, and the frontiers of the two states were fixed as before the commencement of hostilities. The principal advantage gained to France by this treaty, and it proved in the end a most important one, was the command which it gave the government of two experienced and courageous armies, which were forthwith transferred to the seat of war in the Alps, and laid the foundation of the great achievements which in the following campaign signalised the progress of the army of Italy.¹

July 12.

¹ Toul. v.
226. Jom.
vii. 118, 125.
Martens, vi.
124.

20.
Pacification
of La Vendée.

During the whole winter of 1794, the unconquerable Charette maintained, with a few thousand men, the contest in La Vendée. The increase of the Republican forces, the diminution of his own followers, seemed only to augment the resources of his courage. So highly was his perseverance prized, that Suwarroff wrote with his own hand a letter expressive of his admiration; and all the princes of Europe looked to him as the only man capable of restoring the royal cause. But after the fall of Robespierre, and the execution of Carrier, more moderate ideas began to prevail in the French government; and the Committee of Public Salvation became weary of a contest apparently interminable, and which consumed in intestine war a large portion of the forces of the Republic.² At the suggestion of Carnot, they published a proclamation,

Jan. 18.
² Lac. xii.
298. Jom.
vii. 26.

couched in terms of reconciliation and amity; and this having led to an address in similar terms from the Royalist chiefs, conferences took place between the contending parties, and a treaty was concluded at La Jaunais for the final pacification of the west of France.

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The principal conditions of this treaty were the free and undisturbed exercise of their religion to the inhabitants of the insurgent district; the establishment of a corps of two thousand territorial guards, composed of the natives of the country, and paid by government; the immediate payment of two millions of francs for the expenses of the war; various indemnities to the greatest sufferers from its ravages; the removal of the sequestration laid on the property of the emigrants, and all those condemned by the Revolutionary Tribunal; the tacit permission to the people to retain their arms, and an exemption from every kind of tax, levy, or requisition. On their side, the Royalists engaged to submit to the laws of the Republic, and, as soon as possible, surrender their artillery. There were also secret articles, the exact nature of which has never been ascertained; but Charette and the Royalist party always maintained, that they contained an engagement on the part of the Convention, as soon as the state of public feeling would admit of it, to restore the monarchy. This treaty, though not at the time embraced by Stofflet and the Chouans, was shortly after acceded to by both the one and the other. Nine days after the signature of this treaty, Charette and his officers made a triumphal entry into Nantes, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants. Discharges of artillery announced the passage of the Loire, the scene of so many Republican atrocities, by the Royalist hero, who was mounted on a splendid charger, dressed in blue, with the Royalist scarf, and a plume of white feathers on his head. Four of his lieutenants rode by his side, arrayed in the same manner, which formed a striking contrast, to the dress of the commissioners of the Convention, distinguished chiefly by the red cap of liberty.¹

21.
Treaty with
the insur-
gents.

April 20.

¹ Lac. xii.
302, 303.
Beauch. iii.
142, 143.
Journ. vii. 26,
29.

But after the first tumults of public joy had subsided, it became evident that the treaty was a truce rather than a final pacification, and that the seeds of inextinguishable discord subsisted between the opposite parties. The Royalists

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22.
Gradual
estrangement of the
pacified parties from
each other.

and the Republicans associated exclusively among themselves. The officers of Charette appeared at the theatre with the white cockade; though he himself, who had so often rivalled Coligny in war, surpassed him in prudence and caution during peace. Carefully avoiding every menacing or hostile expression, he was yet reserved and circumspect in his demeanour; and it was evident to all, that though anxious to avoid an immediate rupture, he had no confidence in the continuance of the accommodation. The members of the Committee of Public Salvation were impressed with the same conviction. The answer they made to their friends, when pressed on the subject of the treaty, was—"We have little reliance on the submission of Charette; but we are always gaining time, and preparing the means of crushing him on the first symptoms of a revolt." In truth, the Republican pride had too good reason to be mortified at this treaty. Conquerors of all their other enemies, they were yet seemingly humbled by their own subjects; and the peasants of La Vendée had extorted terms which the Kings of Europe had in vain contended for. It is painful to think that the renewal of hostilities in this district, and its tragic termination, was owing to the delusive hopes held out by, and ill-judged assistance of Great Britain.¹

¹ Lac. xii.
304.
Beauch. iii.
241, 248.

23.
Expedition
to Quiberon.

Induced by the flattering accounts of the emigrants, the British government had long been making great preparations for a descent on the western coast of France, by a corps of those expatriated nobles whose fortunes had been rendered all but desperate by the Revolution. Its success appeared to them so certain, that all the terrors of the laws against them, could not prevent a large force from being recruited among the emigrants in England and Germany, and the prisoners of war in the British prisons. The government judged, perhaps wisely, that as the expected movement was to be wholly national, it would be inexpedient to give the command of the expedition to a British commander, or support it by any considerable body of English troops. The forces embarked consisted of six thousand emigrants in the pay of England, with a regiment of artillerymen from Toulon, and they carried with them eighty pieces of cannon, with all their equipages and arms, and clothing for eighty thousand men. They were divided into two

divisions; the first commanded by Puisaye, whose representations had caused the adoption of the plan; and the second by the Count de Sombreuil. A third division of English troops was destined to support the two first, when they had made good their landing on the French coast. The command of the whole was given to the Count d'Artois, and great hopes were entertained of its success, not so much from the numerical amount of the forces on board, as the illustrious names which the nobles bore, and the expected co-operation of the Chouans and Vendéans, who had engaged, on the first appearance of a prince of the blood, to place eighty thousand men at his disposal.¹

The naval affairs of the French, on the western coast, had been so unfortunate as to promise every facility to the invading force. In winter the Brest fleet, in obedience to the positive orders of government, put to sea; but its raw and inexperienced crews were totally unable to face the tempests, which kept even the hardy veterans of England in their harbours. The squadron was dispersed by a storm, five ships of the line were lost, and the remainder so much damaged, that twelve line-of-battle ships were alone able in June to put to sea. This fleet, accompanied by thirteen frigates, surprised the advanced-guard of the Channel fleet, under the command of Admiral Cornwallis, near Belleisle, on the 7th June; but such was the skill and intrepidity of the British admiral, that he succeeded in maintaining a running fight the whole day, and at length extricated his little squadron without any loss, from the fearful odds by which it was assailed. Six days afterwards Lord Bridport, with fourteen ships of the line, and eight frigates, hove in sight, and after two days' manœuvring, succeeded in compelling the enemy to engage. The British admiral bore down in two columns on the hostile fleet, who, instead of awaiting the contest, immediately fell into confusion, and strained every nerve to escape. In the running fight three ships of the line were captured by the English, and, if the wind had permitted all their squadron to take part in the action, there can be no doubt that the whole French fleet would have been taken or destroyed.² As it was, they were so discomfited, that they crowded all sail till they reached the harbour of L'Orient, and made no attempt

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¹ Jom. vii.
135, 143.
Beauch. iii.
419, 421.
Th. vii. 454.

24.
Running
sea fight at
Belleisle

7th June.

13th June.

² James, ii.
124, 127.
Jom. vii.
147. Ann.
Reg. p. 138.
Beauch. iii.
431, 432.
Th. vii. 457.

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XVIII. British the empire of the seas.

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25.
Landing of
the emi-
grants in
Quiberon
Bay.

This brilliant engagement having removed all obstacles in the way of the expedition, the three divisions of the emigrants set sail, and on the 27th appeared in Quiberon Bay. They immediately landed, to the amount in all of about ten thousand men, and made themselves masters of the Fort of Penthievre, which defends the entrance of the peninsula of the same name. Encouraged by this success, they next disembarked all the immense stores and train of artillery, which were intended to organise the whole Royalist forces of the west of France. But dissensions immediately afterwards broke out between Puisaye and D'Hervilly, neither of whom was clearly invested with the supreme direction, the former having the command of the emigrants, the latter of the British forces. At the same time, a small force detached into the interior, having experienced a check, the troops were withdrawn into the peninsula and forts. The Chouans, indeed, flocked in great numbers to the spot, and ten thousand of these brave irregulars were armed and clothed from the British fleet; but it was soon discovered that their desultory mode of fighting was altogether unsuited for co-operation with regular forces; and, on the first occasion on which they encountered the Republicans, they dispersed, leaving the emigrants exposed to the whole shock of the enemy. This check was decisive of the fate of the expedition; the troops were all crowded into the peninsula, lines hastily constructed to defend its entrance, and it was determined to remain on the defensive: a ruinous policy for an invading force, and which can hardly fail of exposing it to destruction.¹

¹ Jom. vii.
153, 154.
Ann. Reg.
p. 71.
Beauch. iii.
453, 455,
470. Th.
vii. 460.

26.
Prodigious
agitation in
the west of
France.

Meanwhile, an inconceivable degree of agitation prevailed in the Morbihan, and all along the western coast of France. The appearance of a few vessels in the Bay of Quiberon before the fleet arrived, filled the peasantry with the most tumultuous joy; without the aid of couriers or telegraphs, the intelligence spread in a few hours through the whole province; and five hundred thousand individuals, men, women, and children, spent the night round their cottages, too anxious to sleep, and listening to every breeze for further information. One of their chiefs, D'Allegré,

embarked on board a fishing-vessel, and reached Lord Cornwallis's vessel, from whom he received a liberal supply of powder, which was openly disembarked on the coast. Instantly the whole population was at work; every hand was turned towards the manufacture of the implements of war. The lead was stript from the roofs of the houses and churches, and rapidly converted into balls; the women and children made cartridges; not a hand was idle; universal joy prevailed; the moment of deliverance appeared to be at hand. The intelligence of the disembarkation of the Royalist forces excited the utmost sensation through all France, and demonstrated what might have been the result, if a powerful army, capable of arresting the Republicans in the field, had been thrown into the western provinces, while its numerous bands were organised in an effective manner.¹

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¹ Beauch. iii.
432, 434.

Hoche immediately took the most vigorous measures to face the danger; his forces were so disposed as to overawe Brittany, and stifle the symptoms of insurrection which manifested themselves in that extensive district, while he himself, having collected seven thousand men, proceeded to the attack of the peninsula of Quiberon. On the 7th July, he advanced in close columns to the lines, and, after a smart action, drove the Royalists back in confusion to the intrenched camp which they had formed near the Fort of Penthièvre. This disaster led to an open rupture between the emigrants and Chouan chiefs. Mutually exasperated, they accused each other of the bad success of the operations, and many thousands of the latter disbanded, and sought to escape from the peninsula. While vigour and resolution thus characterised all the operations of the Republicans, disunion and misunderstanding paralysed the immense force which, under able and united management, might have been placed at the disposal of the Royalists. The Royalist Committee at Paris, either ignorant of, or determined to counteract the designs of Puisaye on the coast, sent instructions to Charette and the Vendéans in Lower Poitou, to attempt no movement till the fleet appeared on his own shores. He, in consequence, renewed his treaty with the Convention at the very time when the expedition was appearing off Quiberon Bay; and refused to accept the arms, ammunition, and money, which

27.
Vigorof's
measures of
Hoche.
The inva-
ders are
blockaded.
July 7.

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¹ Th. vii.
466, 473.
Jom. vii.
154.
Beauch. iii.
459, 462,
545, 546,
547.

Lord Cornwallis tendered to him to enable him to act with effect. At the very time when every thing depended upon unity of action, and a vigorous demonstration of strength in the outset, the Royalists of Poitou, Anjou, Upper Brittany, and Maine, were kept in a state of inactivity by the Royalist Committee; while the emigrants and the peasants of the Morbihan, not a tenth part of the real force of the insurgents, sustained the whole weight of the Republican attack.¹

28.
Their desperate situation.

The misery of the troops, cooped up in the camp, soon became extreme. Eighteen thousand men found themselves shut up in a corner of land, without tents or lodgings of any sort to protect them from the weather, and the want of provisions soon rendered it absolutely necessary to discover some means of enlarging the sphere of their operations. In this extremity, Puisaye, whose courage rose with the difficulties with which he was surrounded, resolved to make an effort to raise the blockade. He was the more encouraged to make this attempt from the arrival of the third division of the expedition, under the Count de Sombreuil, with the best regiments of the Royalists, and bearing the commission to himself as commander-in-chief of the whole allied forces. For this purpose, four thousand Chouans, under the command of Tinteniach, were sent by sea to the point of St James, to attack the Republican intrenchments in rear, while Count Vauban, with three thousand, was dispatched to Carnac to combine with him in the same object, and Puisaye, at the head of the main body, assailed them in front.¹

¹ Jom. vii.
157, 160.
Beauch. iii.
478, 481.
Puisaye, v.
226, 231.

29.
Abortive attempts at succour by the Chouan chiefs.

Notwithstanding the extensive line, embracing twenty leagues, over which this attack on the Republican intrenchments was combined, it might have been attended with success, had not Tinteniach, misled by orders received from the Royalist Committee at Paris, been induced, after landing, to move to Elvin, where he indeed destroyed a Republican detachment, but was prevented from taking any part in the decisive action which ensued on the peninsula; while Vauban, repulsed at Carnac, was compelled to re-embark his troops, and came back only in time to witness the rout of the main body of the Royalists. Meanwhile, Puisaye, ignorant of these disasters, marched out of his camp, at daybreak on the 16th, at the head of

four thousand five hundred gallant men, and advanced towards the enemy. The Republicans fell back at his approach to their intrenchments; and a distant discharge of musketry made the Royalists believe that Tinténiac and Vauban had already begun the attack in the rear, and that the decisive moment was come. Full of joy and hope, Puisaye gave the signal for the assault, and the emigrant battalions advanced with the utmost intrepidity to the foot of the redoubts; but scarcely had they reached them when several masked batteries opened a terrible fire of grape, a shower of musketry from above mowed down their ranks, while the strength of the works in front rendered any further advance impossible. The expected attack in the rear never appeared, the Royalists were exposed alone to the devastating fire of the intrenchments, and after sustaining it for some time with firmness, Puisaye, seeing that the expected diversion had not taken place, gave the signal for a retreat. It was soon converted into a rout by the Republican cavalry, which issued with fury out of the besiegers' lines, and threw the retiring columns into disorder: D'Hervilly was killed, and the Royalists driven back with such vehemence to the fort on the peninsula, that, but for the fire of the English cruisers, the enemy would have entered it pell-mell with the fugitives.¹

This bloody repulse was a mortal stroke to the Royalists. Tinténiac, returning from his unfortunate digression to Elvin, towards the scene of action, on the following day, was encountered and killed, after the dispersion of his forces, by a light column of the Republicans. On the same day Symbreuil disembarked his forces, but they arrived in the fort only in time to be involved in the massacre which was approaching. Hoche, resolved not to let the Royalists recover from their consternation, determined to storm the fort by escalade, without going through a regular siege. On the night of the 20th July, the Republicans advanced in silence along the shore, while the roar of the waves, occasioned by a violent wind, prevented the sound of their footsteps being heard in the fort. A division, under Menaye, threw themselves into the sea, in order to get round the rocks on which the redoubts were erected, while Hoche himself advanced with the main body to

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¹ Th. vii.
481, 495.
Jom. vii.
157, 159.
Beauch. iii.
495, 499.
Puisaye, v.
239, 250.

30.
The Royal-
ists are
defeated,
and their in-
trenchments
stormed.

July 20.

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escalade the ramparts in front. Menaye advanced in silence with the water up to the shoulders of his grenadiers, and though many were swallowed up by the waves, a sufficient number got through the perilous pass to ascend and mount the rocky ascent of the fort on the side next the sea. Meanwhile the garrison, confident in their numbers, was reposing in fancied security, when the sentinels on the walls discovered a long moving shadow at the foot of the works. The alarm was instantly given; the cannon fired on the living mass, and the soldiers of Hoche, torn in pieces by the unexpected discharge, were falling into confusion and preparing to fly, when a loud shout from the other side announced the success of the escalading party under Menaye, and the flashes of the cannons showed them the tricolor flag flying on the highest part of the fort. At this joyful sight the Republicans returned with fury to the charge, the walls were quickly scaled, and the Royalists driven from their posts with such precipitation, that a large park of artillery placed in one of the most advanced quarters was abandoned.¹

¹ Puisaye, v.
261, 267.
Jom. vii.
162, 166.
Th. vii. 488,
490. Lac.
xii. 342, 343.
Beauch. iii.
509, 517.

31.
They are
driven into
the sea or
capitulate.

Meanwhile Puisaye and Vauban, who were awakened by the noise, made ineffectual efforts to rally the fugitives in the peninsula. It was no longer possible. Terror had seized every heart; emigrants, Chouans, men and women, rushed in confusion towards the beach, while Hoche, vigorously following up his success, was driving them before him at the point of the bayonet. Eleven hundred brave men, the remains of the emigrant legions, in vain formed their ranks, and demanded with loud cries to be led back to regain the fort. Puisaye had gone on board the English squadron, in order to put in safety his correspondence, which would have compromised almost the whole of Brittany, and the young and gallant Sombreuil could only draw up his little corps on the last extremity of the sand, while the surrounding waves were filled with unfortunate fugitives, striving, amidst loud cries, and showers of balls, to gain the fishing-barks which hovered in the distance. Many of these boats sunk from the crowds which filled them, and seven hundred persons lost their lives in that way. The English fleet, from the violence of the tempest, was unable to approach the shore, and the remains of the emigrants were supported only by the fire of a British

corvette which swept the beach. At length the Republicans, penetrated with admiration at the noble conduct of their enemies, called out to them to lay down their arms, and they should be treated as prisoners of war; and Sombreuil, with generous devotion, stipulated that the lives of the soldiers should be spared, and the emigrants allowed to embark, without providing any thing for his own personal safety. The capitulation was agreed to by Humbert and the officers present, though Hoche was not implicated in it; and upon its conclusion an officer was dispatched through the surf, who, with great difficulty, reached the corvette, and stopped its destructive fire.^{1*}

The wretched fugitives, numbers of whom were women, who had crowded round this last band of their defenders, now rushed in despair into the waves, deeming instant destruction preferable to the lingering torments awaiting them from their conquerors; from the beach, the Republicans fired at their heads, while many of the Royalist officers, in despair, fell on their swords, and others had their hands cut off in clinging to the boats, which were already loaded with fugitives. Though numbers were drowned, yet many were saved by the skill and intrepidity of the boats of the British fleet, who advanced to their assistance. One of the last boats which approached the British squadron contained the Duke of Levis, severely wounded. Such was the multitude which crowded the shore, that the English boats were compelled to keep off for fear of being sunk by the numbers who rushed into them. "Approach," exclaimed the French to the boatmen, "we ask you only to take up our commander, who is bleeding to death." The ensign-bearer of the regiment of Hervilly added, "Only save my standard and I die content;"¹ with heroic self-devotion they handed up their

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¹ Jom. vi.
171. Th.
vii. 492.
Lac. xii. 343,
350.
Beauch. iii.
509, 520,
521, 522.
Puisaye, vi.
311.

32.

Despair and
dreadful
end of the
fugitives.

¹ Deux
Amis, xiv.
114, 115.
Lac. xii.
350. Jom.
vii. 168,
169. Th.
vii. 493.
Beauch. iii.
526, 527.

* Humbert advanced with the white flag, and said aloud, so as to be heard by the whole line, "Lay down your arms; surrender; the prisoners shall be spared." At the same time he asked a conference with the Royalist general; Sombreuil advanced, and after a few minutes' conversation with the Republican, returned to his own troops, and called out aloud, that he had agreed on a capitulation with the general of the enemy. Many of his officers, more accustomed to the treachery of the Republicans, refused to trust to their promises, and declared, that they would rather fight it out to the last. "What," said Sombreuil, "do you not believe the word of a Frenchman?"—"The faith of the Republicans," said Lunivry, "is so well known to me, that I will engage we shall all be sacrificed." His prophecy proved too true.

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33.
Atrocious
cruelty of
the Repub-
licans.

leader and standard, and returned to the Republican fire, which speedily destroyed them.

Tallien, whom the Convention had sent down with full power, as commissioner of government, to Quiberon Bay, made an atrocious use of this victory, and stained with ineffaceable disgrace the glory of his triumph over Robespierre. In defiance of the verbal capitulation entered into with the Royalists by Humbert and the officers engaged in the combat, he caused the emigrant prisoners, eight hundred in number, to be conveyed to Auray, where they were confined in the churches, which had been converted into temporary prisons, while he himself repaired to Paris, where, by a cruel report, he prevailed upon the government to disregard the capitulation, and bathe their hands in the blood of the noblest men in France. "The emigrants," said he, "that vile assemblage of ruffians sustained by Pitt, those execrable authors of all our disasters, have been driven into the waves by the brave soldiers of the Republic; but the waves have thrown them back upon the sword of the law. In vain have they sent forward flags of truce to obtain conditions; what legal bond can exist between us and rebels, if it be not that of vengeance and death?" In pursuance of this advice the Convention decreed that the prisoners should be put to death, notwithstanding the efforts of the brave Hoche, who exerted himself on the side of mercy.¹

1 Deux
Amis, xiv.
114, 116.
Lac. xii. 355.
Beauch. iii.
530. Jom.
vii. 170.

34.
Noble con-
duct and
death of the
Royalist
prisoners,
and of Sou-
breuil.

The unfortunate men were soon aware of the fate which awaited them; and their conduct in the last extremity reflected as much honour on the Royalist, as their murder did disgrace on the Republican cause. The ministers of religion penetrated into those asylums of approaching death, and the Christian faith supported the last hours of their numerous inmates. An old priest covered with rags and filth, one of the few who had escaped the sword of the Republicans, conveyed its consolations to the numerous captives; and they joined with him in the last offices of religion. Their last prayers were for their king, their country, and the pardon of their enemies. To the executioners they gave the garments which were still at their disposal. Such was the impression produced by the touching spectacle, that even the Republican soldiers, who had been brought up without any sort of religious impressions,

were moved to tears, and joined, uncovered, in the ceremonies which they then, for the first time in their lives, had witnessed. When brought before the military commission, Sombreuil disdained to make any appeal in favour of himself; but asserted, in the most solemn terms, that the capitulation had guaranteed the lives of his followers; that but for a solemn promise to that effect, they would have perished with arms in their hands; that their death was the work of executioners, not soldiers; and that their execution was a crime which neither God nor man would pardon. When led out to execution, he refused to have his eyes bandaged; and when desired to kneel down to receive the fatal discharge, replied, after a moment's reflection, "I will do so; but I bend one knee to my God, and another to my sovereign." The other victims who were led forth insisted in such vehement terms on the capitulation, that the Republican officers were obliged to give them a respite; but the Convention refused to listen to the dictates of humanity, and they were all ordered for execution. Seven hundred and eleven perished with a constancy worthy of a happier fate; the remainder were suffered to escape by the indulgence of the soldiers who were intrusted with their massacre, and the humanity of the commissioner who succeeded Tallien in the command. These atrocious scenes took place in a meadow near Auray, still held in the highest veneration by the inhabitants, by whom it is termed the field of martyrs.*¹

¹ Lac xii.
356, 359.
Beauch. iii.
532, 539.
Jom. vii.
171. Deux
Amis, xiv.
115, 116.

* The Republican authors of the valuable History of the Revolution by Two Friends of Liberty, much to their honour, admit that this violation of the capitulation at Quiberon was indefensible. "Nous n'examinerons point ici," say they, "de quel côté se trouve la vérité; nous presumons seulement que les émigrés, s'attendant bien au sort qui leur était réservé d'après les décrets portés contre ceux qui seraient pris les armes à la main, n'ont dû se rendre qu'en capitulant qu'ils auraient la vie sauvée; mais que le Général et le représentant qui, sans doute, n'avaient pas été présents à cette capitulation, ne se regardaient pas comme liés, et pensèrent devoir exécuter rigoureusement les décrets, déterminés d'ailleurs par des raisons de politique qui demandaient un exemple. Sans vouloir blâmer ces motifs, ni justifier des hommes qui rentraient dans leur patrie en rebelles, nous penchons à croire qu'il eût été plus généreux de renier ces émigrés pour des Français, et de les regarder comme des prisonniers de guerre."—*Histoire de la Révolution, par Deux Amis de la Liberté*. xiv. 116, 117. The English historian need feel no hesitation in condemning this cruel violation of a military capitulation, even when said to have been unauthorised, because he will have occasion to pass a similar judgment on similar violations of military conventions, even when attended with less tragic consequences—in the cases of Schwartzberg's breach of the Convention of Dresden, *infra*, c. lxxxii. § 37; of Nelson's violation of the Capitulation of Naples, c. xxvii. § 98, 99; and the declinature of Wellington and Blücher to protect Ney, after the Convention of Paris, c. xc. § 94.

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35.

Rapid decline of the
Royalist
cause in
the west of
France.

The broken remains of the Quiberon expedition were landed in the Isle of Houat, where they were soon after joined by an expedition of two thousand five hundred men from England, which took possession of the Isle Dieu, and where the Count d'Artois assumed the command. The insurgents of La Vendée, under Charette, marched in three columns to the Sables d'Olonne to join the expedition; but so rapid and decisive were the measures of Hoche, that they were soon assailed by a superior force, and compelled to seek safety by separating in the forest of Aizenay. Several partial insurrections at the same time broke out in Brittany; but from want of concert among the Royalist chiefs they came to nothing. Soon after, the English expedition not having met with the expected co-operation, abandoned Isle Dieu, which was found to be totally unserviceable as a naval station, and returned with the Count d'Artois, who evinced neither spirit nor conduct in this ill-fated service, to Great Britain. From that moment the affairs of the Royalists rapidly declined in all the western provinces; the efforts of the Chouans and Vendéans were confined to an inconsiderable guerilla warfare; and it was finally extinguished in the succeeding year by the great army and able dispositions of Hoche, whom the Directory invested, at the end of the campaign, with the supreme command. It is painful to reflect how different might have been the issue of the campaign had Great Britain really put forth its strength in the contest; and instead of landing a few thousand men on a coast bristling with bayonets, sent thirty thousand men to make head against the Republicans, till the Royalists were so organised as to be able to take the field with regular troops.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, xiv.
116, 118.
Beauch. iii.
540, and iv.
29. Mig. ii.
402. Th. vii.
433. Jom.
vii. 56, 240,
249.

36.
War on the
Rhine.
Extreme
penury and
difficulties
of the Re-
publicans.

The situation of the armies on the northern and eastern frontier remained the same as at the conclusion of the last campaign; but their strength and efficiency had singularly diminished during the severe winter and spring which followed. Moreau had received the command of the army of the North, encamped in Holland; Jourdan, that of the Sambre and Meuse, stationed on the Rhine near Cologne; Pichegru, that of the army of the Rhine, cantoned from Mayence to Strasburg. But all these forces were in a state of extreme penury, from the fall of the paper money,

in which their pay was received; and totally destitute of the equipments necessary for carrying on a campaign. They had neither caissons, horses, nor magazines; the soldiers were almost naked, and even the generals frequently in want of the necessaries of life, from the failure of the eight francs a-month, in silver, which formed the inconsiderable, but necessary supplement to their paper salaries. Those who were stationed in foreign countries contrived, indeed, by contributions upon the vanquished, to supply the deficiency of their nominal pay; and the luxury in which they lived offered a strange and painful contrast to the destitute situation of their brethren on the soil of the Republic. Jourdan had neither a bridge equipage to enable him to cross the Rhine, nor a sufficiency of horses to move his artillery and baggage; Kleber, in front of Mayence, had not a quarter of the artillery or stores necessary for the siege of the place. Discipline had relaxed with the long-continued sufferings of the soldiers; and the inactivity, consequent on such a state of destitution, had considerably diminished their military spirit. Multitudes had taken advantage of the relaxation of authority following the fall of Robespierre, to desert and return to their homes; and the government, so far from being able to bring them back to their colours, was not even able to levy conscripts in the interior, to supply their place. Many resorted to Paris, where the Convention was happy to form them into battalions, for their own protection against the fury of the Jacobins. Soon the intelligence spread that the deserters were undisturbed in the interior; and this extended the contagion to such a degree, that in a short time a fourth of the effective force had returned to their homes. The soldiers thought they had done enough for their country when they had repelled the enemy from its frontiers, and advanced its standards to the Rhine; the generals, doubtful of their authority, did not venture to take severe measures with the refractory; and those who remained, discouraged by the loss of so great a number of their comrades, felt that depression which is the surest forerunner of defeat.¹

The Austrians, on the other hand, having made the greatest efforts during the winter to reinforce their armies, and not having as yet experienced any part of the

¹ Mig. ii.
402. Th. vii.
434. Jom.
vii. 56, 58
St Cyr, iii.
31, 34, 41,
50.

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37.

State of the
contending
armies, and
fall of Lux-
embourg.

exhaustion which extraordinary exertion had brought on the Republican forces, were in a much better state, both in point of numbers, discipline, and equipment. Including the contingents of Swabia and Bavaria, their forces on the Rhine had been raised to a hundred and fifty thousand men; while the French forces on the same frontier, though nominally amounting to three hundred and seventy thousand men, could only muster a hundred and forty-five thousand in the field.* And such was the state of destitution of these forces, that the cavalry was almost completely dismounted; and Jourdan could not move a few marches from his supplies, until he got twenty-five thousand horses for the service of his artillery. The Rhine, that majestic stream, so long the boundary of the Roman empire, separated the contending armies from the Alps to the ocean. The Imperialists had the advantage arising from the possession of Mayence. That bulwark of the empire had been put into the best possible state of defence, and gave the Allies the means of making an irruption with security upon the left bank. Notwithstanding this great advantage, such was the consternation produced by their former reverses, that they remained inactive on the right bank of the river till the end of June, when Marshal Bender, having exhausted all his means of subsistence, and seeing no hope of relief, was compelled to surrender the important fortress of Luxembourg to the Republican generals. Ten thousand men, and an immense train of artillery, on this occasion fell into the hands of the victors.¹

June 24.

¹ Th. vii.
435. Jom.
vii. 38, 59,
61. St Cyr,
iii. 35.

While the Imperialists were thus allowing the bulwark of the Lower Rhine to fall into the hands of the enemy, the

* The distribution of the Republican forces at the commencement of the campaign was as follows, in effective troops, deducting the detachments and sick.

	Active.	Garrisons.	Nominal, including Garrisons.
North, -	67,910	29,000	136,250
Sambre and Meuse, -	87,630	66,000	170,300
Rhine and Moselle, -	56,820	96,800	193,670
Alps, -	14,000	4,800	21,000
Italy, -	27,500	21,000	93,500
Eastern Pyrenees, -	43,290	4,000	82,790
Western do. -	33,780	5,000	75,180
West, -	42,000	-	70,200
Shores of Brittany, -	51,000	-	78,400
Jom. vii. 56. Cherbourg, -	26,000	-	37,700
	449,930	229,000	958,990 ²

Prince of Condé, on the Upper Rhine, was engaged in a negotiation, by which he hoped to procure the frontier fortresses of Alsace for the Bourbon Princes. This Prince, whose little corps formed part of the left wing of the Austrian army, was engaged in a correspondence with the malcontents in Alsace; and from them he learned that Pichegru was not altogether inaccessible to negotiation. In fact, that illustrious man was, on many accounts, discontented both with his own situation and that of his country. Like Dumourier and La Fayette, he had been horror-struck by the atrocities of the Convention, and saw no hope of permanent amendment in the weak and disunited government which had succeeded it; while, at the same time, the state of destitution to which, in common with all the army, he was reduced by the fall of the assignats, in which their pay was received, rendered him discontented with a government which made such returns for great patriotic services. During all the extremities of the Reign of Terror, Pichegru and his army, instead of obeying the sanguinary orders of the Dictators, had done every thing in their power to furnish the means of escape to their victims. He had nobly refused to execute the inhuman decree, which forbade the Republican soldiers to make prisoners of the English troops. His soldiers, after the conquest of Holland, had set a rare example of discipline; and the sway he had acquired over them was such, as to prevent all the license and insubordination which had followed the conquest of Flanders by the forces of Dumourier. In these circumstances nothing was more natural or laudable, than that the same general who had secured the independence of his country by his arms, should strive to establish its internal prosperity by the restoration of a constitutional throne; and it is certain that he engaged in a correspondence with the Prince of Condé for the attainment of this object. The Republican historians allege that his fidelity was shaken by different motives; that his passion for pleasure was restrained by the elusory nature of his pay, which, although nominally four thousand francs a-month, was in reality only one hundred francs, from the depreciation of the assignats, and that he yielded to the offer of a marshal's baton, the government of Alsace,¹ a pension of 200,000

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1794.

38.

Secret negotiations between Pichegru and the Allies.

¹ Th. vii.
441. Lac.
xiii. 86.
Jom. vii. 62,
67. St Cyr,
iii. 69, 71,
75.

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frances, the chateau and park of Chambold, and a million in silver. No decisive evidence has yet been produced on the subject ; but it is certain that, after six months consumed in mysterious communication, Pichegru broke off the negotiation, and prepared to obey the orders of the Convention, by commencing the campaign.

39.
Vast forces
of the Aus-
trians on the
Rhine,
which the
Republicans
cross.

Wurmser, to whom the cabinet of Vienna had entrusted the command of its forces on the Upper Rhine, remained till the beginning of September without making any movement. Mutually afraid, the hostile armies occupied the opposite banks of the Rhine, without attempting to disquiet each other. His forces, including garrisons, amounted to eighty thousand men ; while those of Clairfait, including the same species of force, were ninety-six thousand. The formidable state of defence in which Mayence had been placed, left no hope of reducing it without a regular siege ; while a squadron of gun-boats on the Rhine gave the Allies the command both of that stream and of the numerous islands which lay on its bosom. Jourdan, having at length procured the necessary bridge-equipage, prepared to cross the river in the beginning of September.

Sept. 6.

On the 6th of that month he effected the passage without any serious opposition, at Eichelcamp, Neuwied, and Dusseldorf, and compelled the garrison of the latter town to capitulate. After repulsing the Austrian corps in that vicinity, he advanced slowly towards the Lahn, and established himself on that stream a fortnight afterwards.

Sept. 20.

Meanwhile Pichegru, in obedience to the orders of government, crossed the Upper Rhine at Mannheim, and, by the terrors of a bombardment, compelled that important city, one of the principal bulwarks of Germany, to capitulate. This unexpected event threatened to change the fortune of the war ; for Pichegru, now securely based on the Rhine, seemed equally in a situation to combine with Jourdan for a general attack on the allied forces, or to direct his arms to the reduction of Mayence.¹

¹ Jom. vii.
179. Toul.
v. 314. St
Cyr. iii. 96.
97, 105, 110.

40.
Able and
vigorous
measures of
Clairfait in
defence.

Alarmed by these successes, the Austrian generals made the most prudent dispositions which could have been adopted to arrest the enemy. Clairfait, unable, after the loss of Mannheim, to defend the line of the Lahn, abandoned his position on that river, and fell back behind the Maine ; while Jourdan, following his opponent, and leaving a

division before Ehrenbreitstein, descended into the rich valley of the Maine, and invested Mayence on the left bank of the Rhine, at the same time that Pichegru was debouching from Mannheim. In these critical circumstances, Clairfait displayed a degree of vigour and ability which led to the most important results. Reinforced by fifteen thousand Hungarian recruits, that able general deemed himself in a situation to resume the offensive. Accumulating his forces on his own right, he succeeded, by a skilful march, in turning the French left, and forcing them to fall back into a situation where they had the enemy in their front, and the Rhine in their rear. Jourdan was now in the most perilous position. His communications being threatened, his flank turned, and his rear resting on a great river, exposed his army to destruction in the event of defeat. To avert the catastrophe of the French army a century before at Turin, no other course remained but to raise the siege of Mayence, and fall with his whole forces on Clairfait, who was now in communication with Wurmser, or to abandon all his positions, and recross the Rhine. The disorganised state of his army rendered the former project, afterwards so ably practised by Napoleon before Mantua, impracticable; and therefore he commenced his retreat. It was conducted in the utmost confusion; cannon, men, and horses, arrived pell-mell at the bridges over the Rhine, and hardly fifty men of any corps were to be found together when they regained the left bank. The loss in men was inconsiderable, but the moral consequences of the retrograde movement were equivalent to a severe defeat. Had Clairfait been aware of the circumstance, a great and decisive blow might have been struck; for General Marceau, to whom the blockade of Ehrenbreitstein had been entrusted, having burned his flotilla when he raised the siege, some of the burning vessels were carried down by the stream to Neuwied, where they set fire to the bridge established at that place, which was speedily consumed. Kleber, with twenty-five thousand men, who had not as yet repassed, was now in a desperate situation; but, fortunately for him, the Allies were ignorant of the accident, and Clairfait about the same time relinquished the pursuit and drew his forces towards Mayence, where he meditated operations which soon produced the most important results.¹

¹ Toul. v.
 314, 316.
 Jom. vii.
 200, 202.
 St Cyr, iii.
 150, 159,
 189, 192.

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41.

He attacks
the lines
round May-
ence.
Oct. 29.

Suddenly abandoning the pursuit of the French left wing, this intrepid general turned by forced marches to Mayence, at the head of a chosen corps, and at daybreak on the following morning issued out by several columns to attack the lines of circumvallation which were still in the hands of the Republicans on the left bank of the river. These lines, the remains of which still excite the admiration of the traveller, were of immense extent, and required an army for their defence. The French army had been engaged for a year in their construction, and they were garrisoned by thirty thousand men. The secret of the march of the Imperial army had been so well preserved, that the besiegers were first apprised of their arrival by the sight of the formidable columns which advanced to storm their intrenchments. The Imperialists advanced in three columns, and in admirable order, to the assault; and such was the consternation of the Republicans, that they abandoned the first line almost without opposition. An event of that description is generally decisive of the result in the defence of intrenchments, because the defenders are thunderstruck by seeing their redoubts forced in any quarter, and, instead of thinking of driving back the enemy as in the open field, betake themselves to a precipitate flight. So it proved on the present occasion. The measures of the Austrians were so well taken, that the French found themselves assailed in all quarters at once; they made for some time an obstinate defence in the second line; but at length, perceiving that they were turned by other forces which had crossed below Mayence, they fell into confusion, and fled in all directions. Their loss in this brilliant affair was three thousand men; and they lost, in addition, the whole artillery, magazines, and stores, which they had collected with so much care for the siege of the bulwark of Germany.¹

¹ Toul. v.
320, 322.
Jom. vii.
252, 259.
St Cyr, iii.
200, 202.

42.

Other opera-
tions along
this river,
and the Re-
publicans
driven from
before Man-
nheim.
Oct. 31.

This attack on the part of Clairfait was combined with other operations along the whole line, from Coblenz to Mannheim. On the same day on which it took place, an island, which the Republicans had fortified a league above Coblenz, was captured, with two battalions which composed its garrison; and by this success, which rendered the evacuation of the *tête-du-pont* of Neuwied unavoidable, they were entirely driven below Mayence to the left bank of the river. At the same time, Wurmser attacked and

carried the *tête-du-pont* erected by Pichegru on the Neckar ; and this success, coupled with the great blow struck by Clairfait, compelled Pichegru to retire behind the Pfrim, which was not accomplished without the utmost confusion. The small number of troops which Clairfait had brought to the left bank of the Rhine, alone saved the Republicans on this occasion from the greatest disasters. Pichegru had left a garrison ten thousand strong in Mannheim, and the position which he had occupied enabled him to communicate with the place by his right flank. Despairing of being able to effect its reduction as long as this communication was preserved open, the Austrians resolved to dislodge the French from their position. For this purpose Clairfait was reinforced with twelve thousand men from the army of the Upper Rhine, and he immediately made preparations for an attack. It took place on the following day, and after an obstinate resistance, the Republicans were compelled to abandon the line of the Pfrim, and retire behind the Elsbach, leaving Mannheim to its own resources.¹

While these important events were going forward on the Upper Rhine, Jourdan, with his defeated and discouraged force, was suffering the most cruel perplexity on the Lower. His army was with difficulty reorganised, and put in a condition for active service ; and the Directory having meanwhile succeeded to the helm of affairs, Carnot transmitted to him the most pressing orders to advance to the succour of Mannheim, which was now severely pressed by the Austrians. At length, towards the end of November, he put himself in motion at the head of forty thousand men, and advanced to the Nahe, in the midst of the most dreadful weather. But all his efforts were in vain. The central position of Clairfait and Wurmser both covered the siege of Mannheim, and prevented the junction of the Republican armies ; the defiles by which a communication could have been maintained were all in the hands of the Imperialists, and after several unsuccessful attacks, Jourdan was obliged to fall back, leaving Mannheim to its fate. That strong fortress, with a garrison of nine thousand men, capitulated at the same time to Wurmser. This important event was decisive of the fate of the campaign. Wurmser, now relieved from all apprehensions as to his communications, brought his whole forces to the left bank

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Nov. 9.

Nov. 10.
1 Toul. v.
324. Th.
viii. 95. St
Cyr, iii. 210,
219.

43.
Capitulation
of Mannheim,
and Piche-
gru driven
to the lines
behind the
Queich.

Nov. 26.

Nov. 28.

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Dec. 16.

¹ Jom. vii.
270, 276.
Th. viii. 115,
130. Toul.
v. 323, 324.
St Cyr, ii.
240, 257.

of the Rhine, and drove back Pichegru to the lines of the Quiech, and the neighbourhood of Landau ; while Clairfait pressed Jourdan so severely, that he began to construct an intrenched camp at Traerbach, with a view to secure his passage over the Moselle. In this disastrous state it was with the utmost joy that he received a proposition from the Austrians, who, as well as their opponents, were exhausted with the fatigues of the campaign, for a suspension of arms during the winter, in virtue of which, a line of demarcation was drawn between the contending parties ; and both armies were put into winter-quarters on the left bank of the Rhine.¹

44.
Maritime
operations.
Capture of
Cape of
Good Hope.

Sept. 16.

² Ann. Reg.
p. 139. Jom.
vii. 330.

The French marine was so completely broken by the disasters in the Mediterranean, and at L'Orient, that nothing more of consequence took place at sea during the remainder of the year. The English availed themselves of their maritime supremacy to make themselves masters of the important station of the Cape of Good Hope, which surrendered to Sir James Craig on the 16th of September. Unable to act in large squadrons, the French confined themselves to mere predatory expeditions ; and the vast extent of the English commerce afforded them an ample field for this species of warfare, from which, towards the close of the year, they derived great gains.²

45.
Results of
the cam-
paign.
Declining
state of the
affairs of the
Republicans.

By the result of this campaign the Allies gained considerable advantages. The career of French conquest was checked, the Republican soldiers driven with disgrace behind the Rhine ; and while the Imperial forces, so lately disheartened and desponding, were pressing forward with the energy of conquest, their opponents, distracted and disorderly, had lost all the spirit by which they were formerly animated. The movements of Clairfait and Wurmsér proved that they had profited by the example of their adversaries. Their tactics were no longer confined to a war of posts, or the establishment of a cordon over an extensive line of country, but showed that they were aware of the value of an interior line of operations, and of the importance of bringing an overwhelming force to the decisive point. By adopting these principles, they checked the career of conquest, restored the spirits of their troops, and not only counterbalanced the disadvantage of inferior numbers, but inflicted severe losses upon their adversaries.

This result was the natural effect of the continuance of the contest. The energy of a democracy is often formidable during a period of popular excitement, and is capable of producing unparalleled exertions for a limited period ; but it seldom succeeds in maintaining a lasting contest with a regular and organised government. The efforts of the populace resemble the spring of a wild beast ; if the first burst fails, they rarely attempt a second. During the invasions of 1793 and 1794, the French nation was animated with an extraordinary spirit, and urged to the defence of their country by every motive which can sway a people. But their efforts, how great soever, after a time necessarily and rapidly declined. By the prolongation of the contest they had exhausted the means of longer maintaining war ; the vehemence of their exertions, and the tyranny by which they were called forth, rendered it impossible that they could be continued. The nation, accordingly, which had twelve hundred thousand men on foot during the invasion of 1794, could not muster a third of the number in the following campaign ; and the victor of Fleurus, within a year after his triumph, was compelled to yield to an inferior enemy.

Nothing also is more remarkable than the comparatively bloodless character of the war, up to this period. The battle of Jemappes, which gave Flanders to Dumourier ; that of Nerwinde, which restored it to the Imperialists ; that of Fleurus, which gave it back to the Republicans, were all concluded at a cost of less than five thousand men to the vanquished ; and the loss sustained by the French in the storming of their lines before Mayence, which decided the fate of the German campaign, was only three thousand men. Whereas, the loss of the Austrians at Aspern was thirty thousand ; that of the Russians at Borodino, forty thousand ; that of Wellington's army at Waterloo, twenty-two thousand ; and out of seven thousand five hundred native English who conquered at Albuera, hardly two thousand were unwounded at the conclusion of the fight. So much more desperately did the parties fight as the contest advanced ; so much more vehement were the passions excited in its later stages ; and so much more terrible was the struggle when the Republicans, instead of

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XVIII.

1795.

46.
Feeble character of the war up to this period.

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1795.

47.

Great results which might have followed a vigorous exertion of the allied strength.

the lukewarm soldiers of the South, met the sturdy inhabitants of the North of Europe.

Every thing, therefore, conspires to indicate, that, by a concentrated and vigorous effort, after the first burst of French patriotism was over, the objects of the war might have been achieved, and security from aggression afforded to the neighbouring powers. These objects were not the forcing of an unpopular dynasty upon France, or of a tyrannical government upon its people, but the compelling it to retire within those limits which are consistent with the peace of Europe, and give up its attempts to propagate its revolutionary principles in other states. Had Prussia, instead of weakly deserting the alliance in the beginning of 1795, sent a hundred thousand men to the Rhine, to support the Austrian troops; had Great Britain raised three hundred thousand soldiers, instead of a hundred and twenty thousand, and sent eighty thousand native English to Flanders, instead of five thousand emigrants to Quiberon Bay, no one can doubt, that in the state of exhaustion in which France then was, the Republic would have been compelled to abandon all its conquests. The moment her armies were forced back from foreign states, and thrown upon their own resources; the moment that war was prevented from maintaining war, the weakness arising from financial embarrassments and blighted industry would have become apparent; the decrepitude of age would at once have fallen on the exhausted state. The great error of the Allies, and, above all, of England, at this period, was, that they did not make sufficiently vigorous efforts at the commencement; and thought it enough, in a struggle with the desperate energy of a revolutionary state, to exert the moderate strength of an old and methodical warfare. Nothing is so ill judged, in such a situation, as the niggingly conduct which prolongs a contest; by spending fifty millions more at its commencement, Great Britain might have saved five hundred millions; by sending an army worthy of herself to the Continent in 1795, she might have then achieved the triumph of 1815. It was to this period of lassitude and financial embarrassment, necessarily consequent upon a series of extraordinary revolutionary exertions, that Mr Pitt always looked for the successful termination of the

war. Possibly, even with the slight efforts which alone were then thought practicable by this country, his expectations might have been realised before many years had elapsed, if the ordinary course of human affairs had continued. But the hand of fate was on the curtain; a new era was about to open on human affairs, and a resistless impulse to be given for a period to French ambition, by the genius of that wonderful man who has since chained the history of Europe to his own biography.

CHAP.
XVIII.

1795.

CHAPTER XIX.

FRENCH REPUBLIC—FROM THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE TO
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIRECTORY.CHAP.
XIX.

1794.

1.

Moral effect
of seasons of
mourning on
nations.

"It is a sad calamity," says Jeremy Taylor, "to see a kingdom spoiled, and a church afflicted; the priests slain with the sword, and the blood of nobles mingled with cheaper sand; religion made a cause of trouble, and the best men most cruelly persecuted; government turned, and laws ashamed; judges decreeing in fear and covetousness, and the ministers of holy things setting themselves against all that is sacred. And what shall make recompense for this heap of sorrows when God shall send such swords of fire? Even the mercies of God, which shall then be made public, when the people shall have suffered for their sins. For so I have known a luxuriant vine swell into irregular twigs and bold excrescences, and spend itself in leaves and little rings, and afford but little clusters to the wine-press; but when the lord of the vine had caused the dressers to cut the wilder plant, and make it bleed, it grew temperate in its vain expense of useless leaves, and knotted into fair and juicy bunches, and made account of that loss of blood by the return of fruit. It is thus of an afflicted kingdom cured of its surfeits, and punished for its sins; it bleeds for its long riot, and is left ungoverned for its disobedience, and chastised for its wantonness; and when the sword hath let forth the corrupted blood, and the fire hath purged the rest, then it enters into the double joys of restitution, and gives God thanks for his rod, and confesses the mercies of the Lord in making the smoke to be changed into fire, and his anger into mercy."¹

¹ Jeremy
Taylor, vi.
182, Heber's
Edition.

Never were these truths more strongly exemplified than in France during the progress of the Revolution. Each successive convulsion had darkened the political atmosphere; anguish and suffering incessantly increased; virtue and religion seemed banished from the earth; relentless cruelty reigned triumphant. The bright dawn of the morning, to which so many millions had turned in thankfulness, was soon overcast, and darkness deeper than midnight overspread the world. "But there is a point of depression in human affairs," says Hume, "from which the change is necessarily for the better." This change is not owing to any oscillation between good and evil, in the transactions of the world, but to the reaction which is always produced by long-continued suffering, and the provision made by Nature for the correction of vicious institutions by the consequences which they produce. Wherever the tendency of institutions is erroneous, an under current begins to flow, destined to open men's eyes to their imperfections; when they become destructive, it overwhelms them. The result of the conspiracy of Robespierre and the Municipality, proved that this point had been reached under the Reign of Terror. On all former occasions since the meeting of the States-General, the party which revolted against the constituted authorities had been victorious; on that it was vanquished. The Committees of the Assembly, the subsisting government, crushed a conspiracy headed by the powerful despot who wielded the revolutionary energy of France, and was still supported by the terrible force of the Faubourgs, which no former authority had been able to withstand. This single circumstance demonstrated that the revolutionary movement had reached its culminating-point, and that the opposite principles of order and justice were beginning to resume their sway. From that moment the anarchy and passions of the people subsided, the storms of the moral world began to be stilled, through the receding darkness the ancient landmarks dimly appeared, and the sun of heaven at length broke through the clouds which enveloped him.

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1794.

2.
Example
of this in
France dur-
ing the Re-
volution.
General re-
action
against the
Reign of
Terror.

"Defluit saxis agitatus humor:
Concedunt venti, fugiuntque nubes,
Et minax (nam sic voluere) ponto
Unda recumbit."

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1794.

3.

Singular
event in
the prisons
on the fall
of Robes-
pierre.

¹ Mémoires
de Jose-
phine, i.
327. Lac.
xii 124.
125. Mig.
ii. 348, 349.

4.

Universal
transports
which his
fall occa-
sioned.

An interesting episode in the annals of the Revolution occurred in the prisons during the contest which preceded the fall of the tyrant. From the agitation and cries in the streets, the captives were aware that a popular movement was impending, and a renewal of the massacres of 2d September was anticipated from the frantic multitude. Henriot had been heard in the Place de Carrousel to pronounce the ominous words, "We must purge the prisons." The sound of the *générale* and of the tocsin made them imagine that their last hour had arrived, and they embraced each other with tears, exclaiming, "We are all now eighty years of age!" After two hours of breathless anxiety, they heard the decree of the Convention cried through the streets, which declared Robespierre *hors la loi*, and by daybreak intelligence arrived that he was overthrown. The transports which ensued may be imagined; ten thousand prisoners were relieved from the prospect of instant death. In one chamber, a female prisoner, who was to have been brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal that very day, was made acquainted with the intelligence, by means of signs, from a woman on the street, before she ventured to give public demonstration of her joy; her name became afterwards memorable—it was JOSEPHINE BEAUHARNAIS, future Empress of France.¹

The transports were the same through all France. The passengers precipitated themselves from the public conveyances, embraced the bystanders, exclaiming, "My friends, rejoice! Robespierre is no more; the tigers are dead!" Two hundred thousand captives in the prisons throughout the country were freed from the terror of death; three hundred thousand trembling fugitives issued from their retreats, and embraced each other with frantic joy on the public roads. An epitaph designed for his tomb expressed in powerful language the public opinion on the consequence of prolonging his life:

"Passant, ne pleure point son sort,
Car s'il vivait tu serais mort."

No words can convey an idea of the impression which the overthrow of Robespierre produced in Europe. The ardent and enthusiastic in every country had hailed the beginning of the French Revolution as the dawn of a brighter day in the political world, and in proportion to the

warmth of their anticipations had been the grievousness of their disappointment at the terrible shades by which it was so early overcast. The fall of the tyrant revived those hopes, and put an end to those apprehensions; the moral laws of nature were felt to be still in operation; the tyranny had only existed till it had purged the world of a guilty race, and then it was itself destroyed. The thoughtful admired the wisdom of Providence, which had made the wickedness of men the instrument of their own destruction; the pious beheld in their fall an immediate manifestation of the Divine justice. "The dawn of the arctic summer day after the arctic winter night; the great unsealing of the waters; the awakening of animal and vegetable life; the sudden softening of the air; the sudden blooming of the flowers; the sudden bursting of whole forests into verdure, is but a feeble type of that happiest and most genial of revolutions,—the Revolution of the 9th Thermidor." * 1

The Revolution of 9th Thermidor, however, was by no means, as is commonly supposed, at least in its first stages, the reaction of virtue against wickedness. It was the effort of one set of assassins threatened with death against another. The leaders of the revolt in the Convention which overthrew the central government, Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, Fouché, Amar, Barère, were in no respect better, in some worse, than Robespierre and St Just. Equally unscrupulous in the means they employed, equally bloody in the executions they ordered, they were far more selfish in their objects, and more despicable in their characters. With them the Revolution was not, as with Robespierre, a desperate and sanguinary struggle for the happiness of man, in which all its supposed enemies required to be destroyed; it was merely an engine for advancing their private fortunes. They conspired against him, not because they hated his system, but because they perceived it was about to be directed against themselves. Little amelioration of the state government was to be expected from their exertions. It was public opinion, clearly and energetically expressed after the fall of the Committee of Public Salvation, which compelled them to revert to the path of humanity.² But this opinion was

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1794.

¹ Lac. xii.
126, 128.
Deux Amis
xiii. 3, 5.

5.
Real nature
of the Re-
volution of
9th Ther-
midor.

² Hist. de la
Conv. iv.
215, 218.

* MACAULAY, in review of the *Memoirs of BARÈRE*, *Edinburgh Review*.

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6.
Gradual
fall of the
Committee
of Public
Salvation.

irresistible ; it forced itself upon persons the most adverse to its principles, and finally occasioned the destruction of the very men, who, for their own sakes, had brought about the first resistance to the reign of blood.

The Convention had vanquished Robespierre by means of a unanimous effort, headed and directed by the committees ; but this revulsion of public feeling proved too strong for the committees themselves. The charm of the Decemviral government was broken when its head was destroyed. On the day after the fall of Robespierre there were but two parties in Paris, that of the committee, who strove to maintain the remnant of their power, and that of the libérators, who laboured to subvert them. Every day brought forth a new proof of the vehement revulsion of public feeling. In the Théâtre Français the bust of Marat was pulled down and broken to pieces, amidst loud applause. His bones were ejected from the Pantheon, and cast into a common sewer. The picture of his death, which hung in the hall of the Convention, was removed, and the savage inscriptions provoking to blood with which the walls of the city had been covered, were effaced. The party by whom these changes were urged on, was from the first distinguished by the name of *Thermidorians*, from the day on which their triumph had been achieved. Tallien was at their head, and they soon numbered among their supporters all the generous youth of the metropolis. The party of the committees was paralysed by the fall of the Municipality of Paris, sixty of the most obnoxious members of which had been executed the day after the death of Robespierre. Their influence arose only from the possession of the machinery of government, and the vigour of some of their members, all of whom saw no safety to themselves but in the maintenance of the revolutionary government. Billaud Varenes, Collot d'Herbois, Barère, Vadier, Amar, and Carnot, constituted a body, influenced by the same principles, and capable of maintaining their authority in the most difficult circumstances. But after the counter-revolution of the 9th Thermidor, the current of public opinion soon became irresistible, and they were impelled, in spite of themselves, into measures of humanity.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, xlii.
6, 8. Mig.
ii. 348, 349.
Th. vii. 4,
14. Lac.
xii. 128,
129. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 224, 225.

The Thermidorians were composed of the whole centre of the Convention, the remnant of the Royalists, and the

survivors of the party of Danton. Boissy d'Anglas, Siéyes, Cambacères, Chenier, Thibaudeau, from the moderate party, ranged themselves beside Tallien, Fréron, Legendre, Barras, Bourdon de L'Oise, Rovère, and others, who had followed the colours of Danton. Four of this party were chosen to replace the executed members of the Committee of Public Salvation, and soon succeeded in moderating its sanguinary measures. But great caution was necessary in effecting the change. The Jacobins were still powerful from their numbers, their discipline, and their connexion with the affiliated societies throughout France; and their early support of the Revolution identified them in the eyes of the populace with its fortunes. Hence the Thermidorians did not venture at first to measure their strength with such antagonists, and four days after the death of Robespierre the sittings of that terrible club were resumed. But so vehement was the current of public opinion, so dreadful had been the general suffering under the Reign of Terror, that the friends of clemency daily gained accessions of strength. The seventy-three members of the Assembly, who had protested against the violence of 31st May, were brought forth from prison, and joined their liberators.¹

The two parties were not long in measuring their strength after their common victory. Barère, on the part of the Committee, proposed, on the 30th July, that the Revolutionary Tribunal should be continued, and that Fouquier Tinville should continue to act as public accuser. At his name a murmur of indignation arose in the Assembly, and Fréron, taking advantage of the general feeling, exclaimed—"I propose that we at length purge the earth of that monster, and that Fouquier be sent to lick up in hell the blood which he has shed." The proposal was carried by acclamation. Barère endeavoured to maintain the tone of authority which he had so long assumed; but it was too late. He was obliged to leave the Tribune, and the defeat of the Committee was apparent. The trial of this great criminal took place with extraordinary formality, and in the most public manner, before the Revolutionary Tribunal. It developed all the injustice and oppression of that iniquitous court; the trial of sixty or eighty prisoners in one sitting of three or four hours;

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1794.

7.

And rise of
the Thermidorians.

July 27.

¹ Deux

Amis, xiii.

9, 11. Mig.

ii. 349, 350.

Lac. xii.

129, 130.

Th. vii. 16,

17.

8.

Contests
between the
two parties.
Trial and
death of
Fouquier
Tinville,
July 30.

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¹ Bull. du
Tribunal
Rév. Procès
de Fouquier
Tinville,
No. 25, 28,
60. Toul.
v. 232. Mig.
ii. 351.
Lac. xii.
130. Th.
vii. 37, 38.

the inhuman stopping of any defence; the signature by the judges of blank sentences of condemnation, to be afterwards filled up with any names by the clerks; and the atrocious celerity of the condemnations. After a long process he was condemned, and fourteen jurymen of the same Tribunal along with him. The sentence bore among other charges, "having under colour of legal judgment put to death an innumerable crowd of French citizens of every age and sex." The indignation of the populace was strongly manifested when they were led out for execution; cries, groans, and applauses, broke from the crowd as they passed along. The sombre, severe air of Fouquier especially attracted notice; he maintained an undaunted aspect, and answered the reproaches of the people by ironical remarks on the dearth of provisions under which they laboured.¹

9.
Gradual
return to
humane
measures.

The next measures of the Convention were of a humane tendency. The law of 22d Prairial against suspected persons was repealed, and though the Revolutionary Tribunal was continued, its forms were remodeled, and its vengeance directed in future chiefly against the authors of the former calamities. The captives were gradually liberated from confinement, and, instead of the fatal chariots which formerly stood at the gates of the prisons, crowds of joyous citizens were seen receiving with transport their parents or children, restored to their arms. Agreeably to the advice formerly given by Danton and Camille Desmoulins, they were not all discharged at once, but were gradually enlarged from jails and all at length restored to their friends; and at the end of two months, out of ten thousand suspected persons, not one remained in the prisons of Paris. The efforts of the Jacobins to prevent the liberation of the persons confined in prison in the departments, whom they designated as all aristocrats, were very great: but the numerous and heart-rending details of the massacres which were transmitted to the Convention from every part of the country overwhelmed all opposition. Among the rest, one related by Merlin de Thionville excited particular attention. It was an order signed by a man named Lefevre, an adjutant-general, addressed to, and executed by, a Captain Macé, to drown at Piamboeuf forty-one persons; of whom

one was an old blind man seventy-six years of age; twelve were women of different ages; twelve girls below twenty years; fifteen children, of whom ten were between five and ten years of age; and five still at the breast. The order was conceived in these terms, and rigidly executed: "It is ordered to Peter Macé, captain of the brig Destiny, to put ashore the woman Bidet, and the remainder of the preceding list shall be taken to the heights of Black Peter, and thrown into the sea, as rebels to the law. This operation concluded, he will return to his post."¹

The imprudent zeal of one of their party, however, soon convinced the Thermidorians how necessary it was to proceed with caution in the counter-revolutionary measures. Without any general concert with his friends, Lecointre denounced Billaud, Collot, and Barère, of the Committee of General Safety, and Vadier, Amar, and Vouland, of that of Public Salvation, in the National Assembly. This measure was premature; it alarmed the friends of the Revolution, and was almost unanimously rejected. But for the strong feeling against the former government which existed in Paris, this defeat might have been fatal to the friends of humanity, and restored the Reign of Terror.²

By the advice of Madame de Fontenai, the beautiful mistress, but afterwards the courageous and eloquent wife of Tallien, the Thermidorians called to their support the youth of the metropolis; men at an age when generous feeling is strong, and selfish considerations weak, and whose minds, unwarped by the prejudices or passions of former years, had expanded during the worst horrors of the Revolution. They soon formed a powerful and intrepid body, ever ready to combat the efforts of the Jacobins, and confirm the order which was beginning to prevail. Composed of the most respectable ranks in Paris, they almost all numbered a parent or relation among the victims of the Revolution, and had imbibed the utmost horror at its sanguinary excesses. To distinguish themselves from the populace, they wore a particular dress, called the *Costume à la Victime*, consisting of a robe without a collar, expressive of their connexion with those who had suffered by the guillotine. Instead of arms, they bore short clubs loaded with lead, and were known by the name of *La Jeunesse Dorée*. They pre-

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1794

¹ Hist. de la
Conv. ii.
242, 243.
Bull du
Trib. Rév.
Procès de
Carrier,
No. 12, 13.

10.
Premature
denuncia-
tion of the
Jacobin
leaders.

² Deux
Amis, xiii.
26, 28. Lac.
xii. 132.
144. Mig.
ii. 351, 352.
Hist. de la
Conv. iv.
220, 231.

11.
Rise of the
Jeunesse
Dorée.

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1794.

¹ Deux

Amis, xiii.
39, 40. Lac.
xii. 135, 147.
Th. vii. 38,
39, 112, 113.
Mig. ii. 352,
356, 357.

12.
Their con-
tests with
the Jaco-
bins. They
close their
hall and
destroy
their power.

Sept. 7.

² Deux

Amis, Lac.
xii. 116, 155.
Mig. ii. 357,
359. Toul.
v. 135, 136.
Th. vii.
115, 116,
135, 151,
159, 164.

vailed over the Jacobins at the Palais Royal, where they had the support of the shopkeepers of that opulent quarter, but were worsted in the gardens of the Tuileries, where the vicinity of the club of their antagonists rendered revolutionary influence predominant. Their contests with the democrats were incessant; on the streets, in the theatres, in the public walks, they were ever at their post, and contributed by their exertions in a most signal manner to confirm and direct the public mind. In revolutions, the great body of mankind are generally inert and passive; the lead speedily falls into the hands of those who have the boldness to take it.¹

These contests between the two parties at length assumed the most important character. The whole of Paris became one vast field of battle, in which the friends of humanity, and the supporters of terror, strove for the mastery of the Republic. But public opinion pronounced itself daily more strongly in favour of the Thermidorian party. Billaud Varennes declared in the Popular Society:—"The lion sleeps, but his wakening will be terrible." This declaration occasioned the greatest agitation in Paris; and the cry was universal to assault the Club of the Jacobins. The National Guard of the Sections supported the troops of the Jeunesse Dorée, and their combined forces marched against that ancient den of blood. After a short struggle the doors were forced, and the Club dispersed. On the following day they proceeded to lay their complaints before the Convention, but Rewbell, who drew up the report on their complaints, pronounced their doom in the following words:—"Where was the Reign of Terror organised? At the Club of the Jacobins. Where did it find its supporters and satellites? Among the Jacobins. Who are they who have covered France with mourning; peopled its soil with Bastiles; and rendered the Republican yoke so odious, that a slave bent beneath his fetters would refuse to live under it? The Jacobins. Who now regret the hideous yoke from which we have so recently escaped? The Jacobins. If you want courage to pronounce on their fate at this moment, you have no longer a Republic, since you have the Jacobins." The Assembly provisionally suspended their sittings; but the Club having resumed their meetings on the following day,² they were again assailed by the

Troupe Dorée, with the cry, "Vive la Convention ! à bas les Jacobins !" After an ineffectual struggle, they were finally dispersed, with every mark of ignominy and contempt ; and on the following day, the commissioners of the Convention put a seal on their papers, and terminated their existence.

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1794.
Sept. 8.

Thus fell the Club of the Jacobins, the victim of the crimes it had sanctioned, and the reaction it had produced. Within its walls all the great changes of the Revolution had been prepared, and all its principal scenes rehearsed ; from its energy the triumph of the democracy had sprung, and from its atrocity its destruction arose. A signal proof of the tendency of revolutionary violence to precipitate its supporters into crime, and render them at last the victims of the atrocities which they have committed. A contemporary journalist has preserved a striking account of the universal transports at the closing of this terrible club, which with its affiliated societies had so long covered all France with mourning. "It was a truly touching spectacle to behold the joy of the people at the extinction of the Jacobins. All hearts were opened at the news of the salutary decree of the Convention. In the evening the streets and public places resounded with cries of joy, with almost childish mirth, with games and dances. *Every one pressed his friend's hand, without mentioning why*: all understood what was meant. In the coffee-houses, in the cabarets, toasts were universal to the health of the National Convention ; in the public gardens they parodied a stanza of the Carmagnole with the words—

13.
Universal
joy at their
overthrow.

' Les Jacobins avaient promis
De faire égorgé tout Paris.'

"Many citizens spontaneously illuminated their windows ; a sweeter, a more cordial joy was universal than had appeared during the noisy fêtes conceived by the Committee of Public Salvation, to strew with flowers the bloody avenue to slavery, and adorn the victims whom they were about to sacrifice to their ambition. Is there one amongst you, who, during those odious fêtes, did not feel his heart sink within him, his flesh creep, and who in the enchantment of that compulsory illumination, in the whirl of bought dances, cries of joy,¹ and strains of music in those gardens, decked with so much care, did not

¹ L'Orateur
du Peuple,
No. xxxi.
See also list.
Parl. xxxvi.
179. L'Ami
des Citoy-
ens, No.
xxiii.

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1794.

withdraw within himself in the midst of the intoxicated multitude, to weep over the present, and mourn over the future? Very different is the spontaneous joy, the unbought entrancement, of this auspicious moment."

14.
Trial of the
prisoners
from
Nantes.

Another event, which contributed in the most powerful manner to influence the public mind, was the trial of the prisoners from Nantes, who had been brought up to Paris under the reign of Robespierre. These captives, who were one hundred and thirty in number when they left the banks of the Loire, were reduced to ninety-four by the barbarous treatment they experienced on the road. Their trial was permitted to proceed by the Thermidorian party, in hopes that the detail of the atrocities of the Jacobin leaders, would increase the horror which they had excited in the public mind. It proceeded slowly, and the series of cruelties which it developed exceeded even what the imagination of poets had figured of the most terrible. The exposure of these, and similar atrocities, could not fail in increasing the public indignation against the society of the Jacobins, from whose emissaries they had all proceeded. The prisoners were acquitted amidst the acclamations of the people; and the public voice, wrought up to the highest pitch by the recital of these atrocities, loudly demanded the punishment of their authors. Pressed by the force of public opinion, the Convention was obliged to authorise the accusation of Carrier, the head of the Revolutionary Committee of Nantes, how unwilling soever they might be to sanction a proceeding which they were conscious might be drawn into an example fatal to many of themselves.¹

¹ Bulletin
du Trib.
Rév. No. 20,
21. L'Af-
faire de
Nantes.
Toul. v. 101,
105, 114.
Th. vii. 144,
146.

15.
Trial and
execution of
Carrier, and
dreadful
atrocities
divulged in
its progress.

The trial of this infamous man developed a still more dreadful series of iniquities, and contributed perhaps more than any other circumstance to confirm the inclination of the public mind. One of the witnesses deponed, "that he had obtained permission to visit a chamber in the prisons where three hundred infants were confined; he found them groaning amidst filth, and shivering with cold; on the following morning he returned, but they were all gone; they had been drowned the preceding night in the Loire." Many thousand persons of both sexes, and all ages, including an extraordinary number of children, perished in this inhuman manner. Carrier did not deny these

atrocities, but sought only to justify himself by alleging the orders of the Committee of Public Salvation at Paris, and the necessity of making reprisals against the fanatical cruelty of the insurgents of La Vendée. The massacres of the children, of the women, and the *noyades* of the priests, which could not be vindicated on that ground, he alleged he had not commanded; although he could not dispute that he had permitted them, in a district where his authority was unbounded. After a long trial, this infamous wretch was found guilty of numerous *noyades* and illegal massacres, and condemned and executed. With him were also convicted Grand-Maison and Pinard, members of the Revolutionary Committee of Nantes. The acquittal of the others excited the public indignation so strongly, that the Convention ordered that they should be arrested anew, and the Tribunal which had absolved them abolished.²

Yielding to the growing influence of public opinion, which daily pronounced itself more strongly in favour of humane measures, the Convention at length revoked the decree which had expelled the nobles and priests; and Cambacères, taking advantage of a moment of enthusiasm, proposed a general amnesty for all revolutionary offences other than those declared capital by the criminal code. The proposition was favourably received, and remitted to a committee. On the following day, Tallien proposed the suppression of all the Revolutionary Tribunals; the Jacobins vehemently opposed the proposal, and the Assembly, fearful of precipitating matters by too hasty measures, contented themselves for the present with abridging their power.¹

The manners of the people during those days of reviving order, exhibited an extraordinary mixture of revolutionary recklessness with the reviving gaiety and elegance of the French character. The captives recently delivered from prison comprised all the higher classes in Paris, and their habits gave the tone to the general manners of the day. Never was seen a more remarkable union than their circles afforded of grief and joy, of resentment and forgetfulness, of prudence and recklessness, of generous exaltation and blamable indifference, of Jacobin vulgarity and returning elegance. The first attempt made was to return to gentleness

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¹ Bulletin du
Trib. Rév.
No. 20, p.
77. Lac. xii.
167, 168.
Toul. v. 129,
130. Th.
vii. 169.

16.
Return to
humanity
in the Con-
vention.
Dec. 8.

² Toul. v.
143. Hist.
Parl. xxxvi.
188, 189.

17.
Public
manners
during this
period.

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of feeling and social enjoyment ; any approach to luxury in the dilapidated state of their fortunes was out of the question. The barbarous retaliation of severity for cruelty, which produced such a frightful reaction in the south of France, was unknown in the metropolis : in the saloons of the Thermidorians, nothing but the most humane measures were proposed, or the most generous sentiments uttered. Minds subdued by misfortune, and influenced by the approach of death with religious feeling, breathed, on their first return into the world, much of that benevolent and Christian spirit which had been awakened in many cases for the first time in their minds. Nor was the transformation less violent and immediate in the dresses generally worn ; but in the tumult of reviving enjoyment, pleasure, as is always the case in such circumstances, was sought after with an avidity inconsistent with decorum, fatal to morals. The ladies, in their desire to attract admiration, outstripped the bounds of decency in their attire.* The hideous unwashed Jacobins, with their long black uncombed locks, their haggard eyes and revolting stare, disappeared. Their filthy rags, assumed to please the mob, were exchanged for elegant attire : out of the secret deposits of their plunder were brought out stores of wealth : furniture, dresses, pictures, all of the most costly description, suddenly made their appearance ; the removal of the necessity of assuming the appearance of incorruptibility revealed at once the extent of their cupidity, and the magnitude of their spoliations.¹

¹ Deux Amis, xiv. 30, 34. Luc. xii. 172, 173. Th. vii. 218, 223.

18. Bals des Victimes, and other indications of the public manners.

The two centres of the society of Paris were the Faubourg St Germain, and the quarter of the Chaussée d'Antin ; the first comprising the residence of the remains of the nobility, the last of the bankers and merchants who had risen to wealth during the recent troubles. Rigid economy prevailed in the former ; the pride of riches, and the passion for newly acquired distinction, swayed the latter. At the theatres, at the public assemblies, every thing breathed the

* "Le libertinage était pris pour la galanterie, et l'indécence la plus condamnable pour un raffinement d'élégance. La licence dans la parure fut portée à un tel point que les femmes ne se montraient plus dans les assemblées, et dans les promenades publiques, que la gorge absolument nue, les bras totalement découverts ; un seul voile de gaze cachait si faiblement le reste de leurs corps, que non seulement toutes leurs formes étaient nécessairement indiquées par la légèreté de leur vêtement, mais que sa transparence laissait souvent apercevoir la nudité."—*Deux Amis*, xiv. 33, 34.

recent deliverance from death. No such thunders of applause shook the opera, as when the orchestra struck up the favourite air of the *Troupe Dorée*, called *Le Réveil du Peuple*, which successfully combated the revolutionary energy of the Marseillaise hymn. One of the most fashionable and brilliant assemblies was called *Le Bal des Victimes*, the condition of entrance to which was the loss of a near relation by the guillotine. Between the country-dances, they said, "We dance on the tombs;" and a favourite dress for the hair was adopted from the way in which it had been arranged immediately before execution. The almanacs most in request were called "*Les Almanachs des Prisons*," in which the sublime resignation and courage of many of the captives were mingled with the ribaldry and indecency with which others had endeavoured to dispel the gloom of that sombre abode. But the Christian virtue of charity was never more eminently conspicuous than among those who, recently delivered themselves from death, knew how to appreciate the sufferings of their fellow-creatures.¹

Meanwhile the Convention gradually undid the laws which had been passed during the government of the Terrorists. The law of the maximum of prices, which had been introduced to favour the tumultuous inhabitants of the towns, at the expense of the industrious labourers of the country; the prohibitions against Christian worship; the statutes confiscating the property of the Gironde party, condemned by the Committees, were successively repealed. This was followed by a general measure, restoring to the families of all persons condemned since the Revolution, their property, so far as it had not been disposed of to others. The Abbé Morellet published an eloquent appeal to the public, entitled *Le Cri des Familles*, and Legendre concluded a powerful speech in their favour with these touching words:—"If I possessed one acre belonging to these unfortunate sufferers, never could I taste of repose. In the evening, while walking in my solitary garden, I would fancy I beheld in each rosebud, the tears of an orphan whom I had robbed of its inheritance." The bust of Marat was soon after broken at the Théâtre Feydeau by a band of the *Troupe Dorée*, as it had already been at the Théâtre Français,² and next day his busts were destroyed in

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¹ Deuz
Amis, xiv.
30, 31. Lac.
xii. 174, 176.
Mig. ii. 356.

19.
Gradual
abrogation
of the Revo-
lutionary
measures.
Amnesty to
children of
those exe-
cuted dur-
ing the
Revolution.
Dec. 8.
Dec. 17.
Dec. 19.
Dec. 22.

Dec. 29.
² Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 199,
200, 220.
Mig. ii. 361,
363. Lac.
xii. 177, 179.
Th. vii. 229,
230. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 237, 245.

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all the public places. About the same time, the survivors of the twenty-two proscribed members of the Girondist party, who had been in concealment since the revolt of the 31st May, were restored to their seats in the Assembly; and the Thermidorian party saw itself strengthened by the accession of Louvet, Isnard, Lanjuinais, Henri Larivière, and others, alike estimable for their talents, and their constancy under adverse fortune.

20.
Impeach-
ment of
Billaud
Varennes
and the
Jacobin
leaders.

Strengthened by the accession of so many new members, and the increasing force of public opinion, Tallien and his friends at length proceeded to the decisive measure of impeaching Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, Barère, and Vadier, the remaining heads of the Jacobins. "You demand the Restoration of Terror, said Tallien: "Let us consider the means it employs before we estimate its effects. A government can never inspire terror but by menacing with capital punishments, by menacing without intermission, without distinction, without investigation, all who oppose it: by menacing without proof, on mere suspicion, on no ground at all: by striking continually with relentless hand, in order to inspire terror into all the world. You must suspend over every action a punishment, over every word a threat, over silence even a suspicion: you must place under every step a snare, in every family a traitor, in every tribunal an assassin: you must put every citizen to the torture, by the punishment of multitudes, and subsequent massacre of the executioners, lest they should become too powerful. Such is the system of governing by terror; does it belong to a free, humane, and regular government, or to the worst species of tyranny?" These eloquent words produced a great impression: the opposition against the Jacobins became so powerful, both within and without the Assembly, that a return to severe measures was impossible, and the government was swept along by the universal passion for a humane administration.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 254,
255. Deux
Amis, xiii.
80. Hist. de
la Conv. iv.
231.

21.
Extreme
distress and
agitation in
France.
March 1795.

This bold step, however, excited the most violent tumults among the democratical party. Several causes at that period contributed to inflame the public discontent. The winter, which had set in with uncommon severity, exposed many of the lower classes to suffering; a scarcity of provisions was, as usual, ascribed by the multitude to the conduct of government, and the dreadful depreciation of

the assignats threatened almost every individual in the kingdom with ruin. Instruments of this dangerous description to the amount of above eight, milliards of francs, or £320,000,000 sterling, had been put into circulation by the Revolutionary government; and although their influence had been prodigious at the moment in sustaining the credit of the state, and even causing its coffers to overflow, yet their nominal value soon gave way, from the distrust of government, the vast excess of the circulating medium, and the immense quantity of confiscated property which was at the same time brought to sale; and they had now fallen to one-fifteenth of the sum for which they were issued. "The worst rebellions," says Lord Bacon, "are those which proceed from the stomach;" and of this truth Paris soon furnished an example. The Jacobin leaders, threatened with accusation, used their utmost exertions to rouse the populace, and the discontent arising from so much suffering made them lend a willing ear to their seditious harangues. Carnot was not included in the Act of Accusation; but he had the magnanimity to declare, that, having acted with his colleagues for the public good, he had no wish but to share their fate. This generous proceeding embarrassed the accusers; but, in order to avoid implicating so illustrious a character in the impeachment, it was resolved to limit it to some only of the members of the Committee, and Amar, Vouland, and the painter David, were excluded: the last of whom had disgraced a fine genius by the most savage revolutionary fanaticism.¹

On the 1st April, a revolt was organised in the Faubourgs, to prevent the trial of Billaud Varennes, Collet d'Herbois, Barère, and Vadier, which was about to commence two days after. The cry of the insurgents was—"Bread, the constitution of 1793, and the freedom of the patriots in confinement." The universal suffering which had followed the democratic rule, afforded the Jacobins too powerful a lever to move the passions of the people; and as usual in such cases, they found no difficulty in making them believe that their distresses were not owing to their own excesses, but to the abridgement of their power. "Since France had become republican," says the graphic annalist, himself a member of the Convention, and supporter of Robespierre, "every species of evil had accumulated upon its devoted

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¹ Deux
Amis, xiii.
37, 39. Hist.
Parl. xxxvi.
184, 192.
Lac. xii. 174,
191, 194.
Mig. ii. 364,
365. Th. vii.
249, 250.
Hist. de la
Conv. iv.
232.

22.
Revolt of
the populace
to save the
Jacobin
leaders.
April 1.

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head : famine, a total cessation of commerce, civil war, attended by its usual accompaniments, conflagration, robbery, pillage, and murder. Justice was interrupted, the sword of the law wielded by iniquity : property spoliated, confiscation rendered the order of the day, the scaffold permanently erected, calumnious denunciations held in the highest estimation. Nothing was wanting to the general desolation : virtue, merit of every sort, were persecuted with unrelenting severity : debauchery encouraged, arbitrary arrests universally established, the revolutionary armies ploughing through the state like a devouring flame, hatred every where fomented, hatred and disunion brought into the bosom of domestic circles. Never had a country descended so low : never had a people been overwhelmed by a similar chaos of crimes and abominations." Instigated by such sufferings, a formidable band soon surrounded the Assembly. Speedily they forced their way in ; drunken women, abandoned prostitutes, formed the revolting advanced guard ; but speedily a more formidable band of petitioners, with pikes in their hands, filled every vacant space.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 260,
262. Hist.
de la Conv.
ii. 215, 216.

23.
Defeat of
the insur-
gents.

Having penetrated to the bar, they commenced the most seditious harangues :—" You see before you," said they, " the men of the 14th July, the 10th August, and the 31st May. They have sworn to conquer or die : they will maintain the constitution of 1793, and the declaration of rights. It is high time that the working-classes should cease to be the victims of the selfishness of the rich, and the cupidity of merchants. Where is the abundant harvest of last year ? Have we destroyed the Bastille to raise up a thousand others for the imprisonment of the patriots ? Public misery is at its height : the assignats are worth nothing ; for you have passed decrees which have destroyed their value ; and you, sacred Mountain, the men of the 14th July invoke your aid in this crisis to save the country." With these words, ascending the benches of the members, they seated themselves with the deputies of the Mountain. Every thing announced the approach of a crisis ; the Jacobins were recovering their former audacity, and the majority of the Assembly, labouring under severe apprehension, were on the point of withdrawing, when, fortunately, a large body of the Troupe Dorée, who had assembled at the sound

of the tocsin, entered the hall, under the command of Pichegru, chanting in loud strains the "*Réveil du Peuple*." The insurgents knew their masters; and that formidable body, before whom the strength of the monarchy had so often trembled, yielded to the courage of a few thousand undisciplined young men. The crowd, lately so clamorous, gradually withdrew from the bar, and in a short time, the accused members were left alone to the vengeance of the Assembly, to answer for a revolt which they had so evidently excited.¹

The Thermidorians made a humane use of their victory. They were fearful of making too large chasms in the ranks of the allies by whose assistance they had so recently been delivered from the tyranny of Robespierre; and they justly feared a reaction in the public mind, if they put themselves in practice, on their first triumph, the bloody maxims which they had so severely condemned in their adversaries. By concert with the leaders of the Girondists, Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, and Barère, were condemned to the limited punishment of transportation; and seventeen members of the Mountain, who had seemed most favourable to the revolt, were put under arrest, and the next day conducted to the Chateau of Ham. The persons thus put in confinement included Cambon, Ruamps, Thuriot, Amar, and the whole strength of the Jacobin party. The transference of the condemned deputies to the Chateau of Ham was not accomplished without some difficulty. They were once rescued by the insurgent populace; but Pichegru having arrived at the head of three hundred of the Troupe Dorée, the mob was dispersed, and the prisoners were again seized and conducted to the place of their confinement. Nothing is more instructive in the history of the French Revolution than the important consequences which, in all its stages, attended the efforts even of the smallest body, acting energetically in the cause of order.²

The fate of these revolutionary leaders was commensurate to their crimes, in the colony to which they were conveyed. Their lives, which were in the first instance threatened by the burning climate of Cayenne, were saved by the generous kindness of the Sisters of Charity, who, in the hospital on that distant shore, continued to practise

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¹ Hist. Parl. xxxvi. 269, 274. Lac. xii. 198. Mig. ii. 365. Hist. de la Conv. iv. 295, 305.

24.

Humanity of the Thermidorians after their victory. The accused are only transported.

² Deux Amis, xiii. 108. Hist. Parl. xxxvi. 274, 300. Lac. xii. 198, 200. Mig. ii. 367. Toul. v. 213. Th. vii. 290, 300.

25.

Their subsequent fate at Cayenne.

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towards the most depraved of mankind the sublime principles of forgiveness of injuries. Collot d'Herbois, shortly after his recovery, endeavoured to engage the slaves of the colony in a revolt; being defeated in the attempt, he was confined in the Fort of Siminari, where he died from the effects of a bottle of spirits, which he swallowed in a moment of despair. Billaud Varennes survived long the other companions of his exile; his hardened mind prevented him from feeling the pangs of remorse, and his favourite occupation was teaching a parrot which he had tamed, the jargon and the indecencies of the revolutionary language. His punishment, and it was a dreadful one, consisted in the tempest of passion within his own breast.

"Nullo martirio, fuor che la tua rabbia,
Sarebbe al tuo furor dolor compito." *

¹ Lac. xii.
201, 202.
Mém. de
Barère,
Introd. 87,
100. Deux
Amis, xiii.
108, 109.

Barère had nearly died shortly after his sentence, of a loathsome malady which he had contracted at Rochefort; but he survived that disease and escaped from prison, and was restored to France by Napoleon in 1800, where he lingered out his life an obscure pamphleteer in the Imperial pay; and before the expiry of his exile, Billaud Varennes beheld the arrival, in the hut next his own, of the illustrious Pichegru, whose vigour had been so instrumental in conducting him thither.^{1†}

26.
Renewed
efforts of
the Jacobins.
Excessive
misery at
Paris.

The Jacobins were broken, but not subdued. By the fall of Robespierre, and the execution of his associates in the Municipality, they had lost the Commune; the closing of their place of debate had deprived them of their centre of operations: by the exile of so many members of the Assembly, they were bereaved of their ablest leaders. Still there remained to them the forces of the Faubourgs; the inhabitants of which retained the arms which they had

* "No martyrdom but your own rage
Could be a pain equal to your atrocity."

DANTE, *Inferno*, xiv. 65.

† Barère was employed in obscure situations by Napoleon, and was alive at Brussels, where he was living in great poverty, in 1831. It was one of his favourite positions at that time, "that the world could never be civilized till the punishment of death was utterly abolished, and that no human being had a right to take away the life of another." This was the man who said in 1793, "the Tree of Liberty cannot flourish if it is not watered by the blood of a king;" and "*Il n'y a que les morts qui ne reviennent pas.*" So completely does a Revolution unhinge the human mind, that no reliance can be placed, in its vicissitudes, on any thing but the sense of duty which religion inspires. Before the Revolution he was the Marquis de Viéussac, with an ample fortune. He died at Brussels on 13th January 1841.—See SIR ARTHUR BROOKS: *FALNER'S Travels in Germany*, i. 196.

received at an early period of the revolutionary troubles ; while their needy circumstances, and exasperation at the high price of provisions, rendered them ready for the most desperate enterprises. In the *Annales Patriotiques* of 19th May 1795, it was stated—"It would be difficult to find a people upon the face of the globe so unhappy as that of Paris. Yesterday we received each a ration of two ounces of bread ; that pittance, small as it is, has been diminished to-day. That measure has spread consternation among the people, who murmur now louder than ever. All our streets resound with the cries of those who are dying of famine." The failure of the revolt on 1st April did not discourage their leaders ; they saw in it only a proof of the necessity of making a greater effort with more formidable forces. A general insurrection of the Faubourgs was agreed on for the 20th May ; above thirty thousand men, armed with pikes, were then to march against the Convention, a greater force than that which had proved victorious on many former occasions, and never before had they been animated by so ferocious a spirit. Their rallying cry was, "Bread and the Constitution of 1793."¹

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1795.

May 19.

¹ Deux
Amis, xiii.
125, 129.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 310,
312. An-
nales Patrio-
tiques.
March 19.

The misery at Paris at this time, in consequence of the famine which the Reign of Terror had brought upon France, and the general failure of agricultural exertion, in consequence of the forced requisitions and the law of the *Maximum*, had now risen to the very highest pitch. A contemporary republican writer gives the following energetic picture of the public suffering : "The Convention had lost all its popularity, because it had evinced so little disposition to relieve the sufferings of the people, which had now become absolutely intolerable. The anarchists, the enemies of order, profited by this ferment, and did their utmost to augment it, because that class reaped no harvest but in the fields of misery. France, exhausted by every species of suffering, had lost even the power of uttering a complaint ; and we had all arrived at such a point of depression, that death, if unattended by pain, would have been wished for even by the youngest human being, because it offered the prospect of repose, and every one panted for that blessing at any price."² But it was ordained that many days, months, and years, should still

27.
Excessive
misery at
Paris, and
great insur-
rection on
May 20.

² Duchess
D'Abrantes,
i. 296. Mig.
ii. 370.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 320,
328.

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May 20.

28.
Prepara-
tions for the
insurrection
of the 20th
May.

continue in that state of horrible agitation, the true foretaste of the torments of hell." The mobs which had, for some weeks preceding, assembled in the streets on account of the high price of provisions and universal suffering, prevented the Convention from being aware of the approach of a great popular movement, or of the magnitude of the danger which threatened them.

No sooner, however, were they informed of it, on the morning of the revolt, by the Committees of Government, than the leaders of the Convention took the most prompt measures to maintain their authority. They instantly declared their sittings permanent, voted all assemblages of the people seditious, named commanders of the armed force, and summoned the National Guard of the Sections by the sound of the tocsin to their defence. The succeeding night (19th May) was one of the most frightful which occurred during the whole course of the Revolution. From sunset Paris was the theatre of unceasing perturbation. Seditious groups were formed on the quays, in the squares, on the boulevards: a crowd of noisy discontented persons traversed every quarter, calling on the discontented, the famishing, the desperate to revolt: bands of women went from door to door knocking aloud, raising alarming cries in the streets, deploring the death of the "*good Robespierre*," whom the aristocrats had put to death, and calling on the people to rise against their oppressors, march straight to the Tuileries, and install the true Republicans in power. The générale and the tocsin sounded at the same time: to their incessant clang were soon joined hideous cries, fierce vociferations, mingled with the occasional discharge of muskets and pistols: while the cannon of government sounded at intervals: and the deep bell, placed lately on the summit of the Great Pavilion of the Tuileries, by its loud and measured toll called the National Guard to the defence of the Convention.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, xiii.
128, 130.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 311,
315. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 310, 311.
Lac. xii.
218. Th.
vii. 381.
Mig. ii. 367.

29.
Danger of
the Govern-
ment.

Hesitation, as usual in presence of real danger, appeared on the following morning among the supporters of order. The Jacobins were already in arms; immense assemblages appeared round the Pantheon, in the Place of the Bastille, in that of Notre Dame, in the Place de Grève, in the Place Royale. The whole city was in agitation: vast bodies of insurgents by daybreak surrounded the Assembly, and by

ten o'clock every avenue to its hall was choked with a forest of pikes. The insurgents had adopted the most energetic measures to restore the democratic order of things. In the name of the "Insurgent people, who had risen to obtain bread, and resume their rights," they established a provisional committee, which immediately abolished the existing government, proclaimed the democratic Constitution of 1793; the dismissal of the members of administration and their arrest; the liberation of the patriots in confinement; the immediate convocation of the primary assemblies; the suspension of all authority not emanating from the people. They resolved to create a new Municipality to serve as a centre of operations, to seize the telegraph, the barriers, the cannon of alarm, and the tocsin; and to invite all the forces, both regular and irregular, to join the banners of the people and march against the Assembly.¹

Scarcely were the decrees of the Convention passed, when a furious multitude broke into the hall, crying aloud for bread and the Constitution of 1793. The President Vernier behaved with a dignity befitting his situation. "Your cries," he said, "will not alter one iota of our measures; they will not hasten by one second the arrival of provisions: they will only retard them." A violent tumult drowned his voice; the insurgents broke open the inner doors with hatchets, and instantly a vociferous multitude filled the whole of the room. A severe struggle ensued between the National Guard, entrusted with the defence of the Assembly, and the furious rabble. Vernier was torn from the chair: it was immediately occupied by Boissy d'Anglas, who, through the whole of that perilous day, evinced the most heroic firmness of mind. Féraud, with generous devotion, interposed his body to receive the blows destined for the president; he was mortally wounded, dragged out by the populace, and beheaded in the lobby. They instantly placed his head on a pike, and with savage crier re-entered the hall, bearing aloft in triumph the bloody trophy of their violence. Almost all the deputies fled in consternation; none remained excepting the friends of the revolt and Boissy d'Anglas, who, with Roman constancy, filled the chair, and, regardless of all the threats of the multitude, unceasingly pro-

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¹ Deux
Amis, xiii.
141, 143.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 313,
321. Mig.
ii. 368, 369
Th. vii. 384.
Hist. de la
Conv. iv.
311, 312.

30.
Convention
besieged.
Heroic con-
duct of
Boissy
d'Anglas.
The mob
master the
Convention.

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tested, in the name of the Convention, against the violence with which they were assailed. They presented to him the lifeless head of Féraud on the top of the pike, and waved it before his eyes; he turned aside with emotion from the horrid spectacle; they again presented it, and he bowed with reverence before the remains of fidelity and devotion. The multitude laughed loudly and applauded long at the sight of the bloody head. Cries of "Bread! bread! Liberate all the patriots!" resounded for more than half an hour through the hall, with such vehemence that no other voice could be heard. He was at length torn from the chair by the efforts of his friends, and the insurgents, overawed by the grandeur of his conduct, permitted him to retire without molestation. Being now undisputed masters of the Convention, the insurgents, with the aid of their associates in the Assembly, proceeded without delay to assume the government. Amidst the gloom of twilight, they named a president, got possession of all the bureaux, and in the midst of deafening applause, passed a series of resolutions declaratory of their intentions. The most important of these were, the restoration of the Jacobin club, the re-establishment of the democratic constitution, the recall of the exiled members, the dismissal of all the existing members of the government. A provisional administration, and a commander of the armed force, were named, and every thing seemed to indicate a complete revolution.¹

¹ Deux
Anis, xiii.
140, 141.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 341,
343. Mig.
ii. 370.
Lac. xii.
221, 223.
Th. vii. 386,
394. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 320, 336,
337.

31.
But are at
length de-
feated by the
Committees
and the
Troupe
Dorée.

But though the Assembly was dissolved, the Committees still existed, and their firmness saved France. All the efforts of the insurgents to force their place of meeting were defeated by the vigour of a few companies of the National Guard, and a determined band of the *Troupe Dorée*, who guarded the avenues to that last asylum of order and humanity. As night approached, many of the mob retired to their homes, and the troops of the Sections began to assemble in force round the Committees. Encouraged by the strength of their defenders, they even returned to the seat of government, and there ventured on an open attack on the insurgents. The grenadiers of the Sections advanced with fixed bayonets, the pikemen of the Faubourgs stood their ground, and a bloody strife ensued

in the hall and on the benches of the Convention. The opposing cries, "Vivent les Jacobins!" "Vive la Convention!" resounded from the opposite sides of the room, and success was for a few minutes doubtful. At length the insurgents were forced back at the point of the bayonet, and a frightful mass of men and women, half of whom were intoxicated, were driven headlong, amidst frightful cries, out of the hall. At eleven o'clock Legendre made a sally, and speedily routed the surrounding multitude: they made a resistance as pusillanimous as their conduct had been violent; and the members who had fled, resumed at midnight their places in the Convention. All that had been done by the rebel authority was immediately annulled; eight-and-twenty members who had supported their proceedings were put under arrest, and at five in the morning they were already five leagues from Paris. Such was the termination of this memorable revolt, which obtained the name of the insurrection of the 1st Prairial. On no former occasion had the people evinced such exasperation, or a spectacle so terrible been exhibited in the legislature. If cannon were not planted in battery against the Convention, as on the 31st May, yet the scenes in the interior of its hall were more bloody and appalling; and the victory of the populace for the time not less complete. The want of design and decision on the part of the insurgents alone made them lose the victory after they had gained it, and saved France from a return to the Reign of Blood.

But the Faubourgs, though defeated, were not subdued. On the following day the tocsin sounded in every quarter of Paris at eight o'clock in the morning; the générale beat to summon the National Guard; and the Convention, little expecting to survive the day, assembled in their hall at nine. The insurgents quickly appeared in great strength; they advanced in still greater force against the Convention, and had already pointed their cannon against the place of its deliberation. The conduct of the President Legendre on this trying occasion was in the highest degree admirable. The sound of the approach of the cannon made several members start from their seats, and run towards the door. There new terrors appeared: the cannoniers of the Convention, as soon as they saw the guns

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¹ Deux
Amis, xlii.
144. Mig
ii. 371.
Lac. xii. 223.
Th. vii. 395,
398. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 339, 344.
Hist. Pari.
xxxvi. 351.

32.
Fresh efforts
of the Jaco-
bins.
May 21.

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of the Faubourgs charged, went over to the mob, and, both united, pointed them, with the matches lighted, against the Assembly. All seemed lost: a similar defection the other way had ruined Robespierre. But, in that extremity, the conduct of the Président Legendre proved the salvation of the country. "Representatives!" cried he, "remain at your posts; be steady. Nature has destined us all to death; a little sooner or later is of trifling moment; but an instant's vacillation would ruin you for ever." Awed by these words, they resumed their seats, and awaited in silence the enemies who surrounded the hall. Their defenders soon arrived; the Jeunesse Dorée appeared in strength: arms were distributed to thirty thousand men; the cavalry drew around them in imposing numbers; the Sections Lepelletier and La Buttemoulins ranged themselves on the side of the Convention; cannon were planted, and platoons ready to discharge on both sides. Intimidated by a resistance they had not expected, the chiefs of the insurgents paused: and the Assembly, taking advantage of their hesitation, entered into a negotiation with their leaders, who prevailed on the people to retire, after receiving the assurance that the supply of provisions for the capital should be attended to, and the laws of the Constitution 1793 enforced. The result of that day demonstrated, that the physical force of the populace, however formidable, being deprived of the guidance of leaders of ability, could not contend with the permanent influence of the government.¹

Instructed by so many disasters, and such narrow escapes from utter ruin, the Convention resolved on the most decisive measures. Eleven of the most obnoxious members of the Mountain—viz., Rhul, Romme, Goujon, Du Quesnoy, Duroy, Soubrani, Bourbotte, Peyssard, Forrestier, Albitte, and Prieur de la Marne, were delivered over to a military commission, or the ordinary tribunals, by whom they were all condemned, except the three last, who escaped. Three of them, Romme, Goujon, and Du Quesnoy, stabbed themselves at the bar on receiving sentence, and expired in presence of the judges; several of the others mortally wounded themselves, and were led, still bleeding, to the scaffold.² They all died with a stoical firmness, so often displayed during those days of anarchy, the victims of political, worse

¹ Hist. Parl. xxxvi. 366, 372. Deux Amis, xiv. 147, 149. Mig. ii. 372. Hist. de la Conv. iv. 349, 350.

33.
Trial and condemnation of Romme and the Jacobin remnant.

June 17.
² Lac. xii. 230. Mig. ii. 373. Th. vii. 407, 408. Hist. de la Conv. iv. 351. Hist. Parl. xxxvi. 379.

than any religious fanaticism. Barère, Collot d'Herbois, Varennes, and Vadier, were ordered to be tried by the criminal tribunal of Charente Inferieure; but before the decree arrived at Rochefort, they had all, except Barère, been transported or escaped. Barère was tried and sentenced to transportation; but he succeeded in escaping from the prison of Saintes.

At length the period had arrived when the Faubourgs, whose revolts had so often proved fatal to the tranquillity of France, were to be finally subdued. The murderer of the deputy Féraud had been discovered, and condemned by a military commission. When the day of his punishment approached, the Convention, to prevent another revolt, ordered the disarming of the Faubourgs. A band of the most intrepid of the Troupe Dorée imprudently advanced into that thickly peopled quarter; and after seizing some guns found themselves surrounded by its immense population. They owed their safety to the humanity or prudence of the leaders of the revolt, who hesitated to imbrue their hands in the blood of the best families of Paris. But no sooner were they permitted to retire, than the National Guard, thirty thousand strong, supported by four thousand troops of the line, surrounded the revolutionary quarter; the avenues leading to it were planted with cannon, and mortars disposed on conspicuous situations to terrify the inhabitants into submission. Alarmed at the prospect of a bombardment, by which their property would have been endangered, the master manufacturers, and chiefs of the revolt, had a conference, at which it was resolved to make an unconditional surrender. They submitted without restriction to the terms of the Assembly; their cannon were taken from them, the cannoniers disbanded; the revolutionary committees suppressed; the constitution of 1793 abolished; and the formidable pikes, which since the 14th July 1789, had so often struck terror into Paris, finally given up. Shortly after, the military force was taken from the populace. The National guards were organised on a new footing; the workmen, the valets, the indigent citizens, were excluded from their ranks; and the new members, regularly organised by battalions and brigades, were subjected to the orders of the Military Committee.¹ At the same time, in accordance with an earnest

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34.
Condemnation of Féraud's murderer. Disarming of the Faubourg St Antoine, and termination of the reign of the multitude. May 24.

¹ Deux Amis, xiii. 150, 153. Hist. Parl. xxxvi. 206, 207.

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petition from the few remaining Catholics, they were permitted to make use of the churches, on condition of maintaining them at their own expense.

May 24.

¹ Mig. ii. 373.

Th. vii. 410.

420. Lac.

xii. 227.

Toul. v. 260,

261. Hist.

de la Conv.

iv. 351, 352.

Thus TERMINATED THE REIGN OF THE MULTITUDE, six years after it had been first established by the storming of the Bastile. From the period of their being disarmed, the populace took no further share in the changes of government; they were brought about solely by the middle classes and the army. The Revolution, considered as a movement of the people, was thereafter at an end; the subsequent struggles were merely the contests of other powers for the throne which they had made vacant.¹

The gradual relaxation of the extraordinary rigour of government erected by the Convention, presents an interesting epoch in the history of the Revolution.

35.

Measures of
the Conven-
tion after
the fall of
Robes-
pierre.

After the overthrow of Robespierre, the Convention endeavoured to retrace their steps towards the natural order of society; but they experienced the utmost difficulty in the attempt. To go on with the *maximum*, forced requisitions, and general distribution of food, was impossible; but how to relax these extreme measures was the question, when the general industry of the country was so grievously reduced, and the usual supplies so much straitened, both by the abstraction of agricultural labourers, the terror excited by the requisitionists, and the forced sales at a nominal and ruinous price. The first step towards a return to the natural state was an augmentation of the price fixed as a *maximum* by two-thirds, and a limitation of the right of making forced requisitions. But these oppressive exactions were in fact abandoned by the reaction in the public feeling, and the cessation of terror, after the fall of the Dictatorial government. The assignats going on continually declining, the aversion of all the industrial classes to the *maximum* was constantly increasing, because the losses they sustained through the forced sales were thereby daily augmented; and the persons entrusted with the administration of the laws, being of a more moderate and humane character, were averse to have recourse to the sanguinary measures which were still placed at their disposal.² Thus there was every where in France a general endeavour to elude the *maximum*, and the newly constituted authorities winked at frauds

² Deux

Amis, xiii.

137, 139.

Hist. Parl.

xxxvi. 207.

Mig. ii. 402.

Hist. de la

Conv. iv.

257, 258.

Th. vii. 66,

139, 224,

225.

which they felt to be the necessary consequence of so unjust a law. No one, during the Reign of Terror, ventured openly to resist regulations which rendered the industrial and commercial classes tributary to the soldiers and the multitude; but when the danger of the guillotine was at an end, the reaction against them was irresistible.

Many months had not elapsed after the 9th Thermidor, before the total abolition of the *maximum* and forced requisitions was demanded in the Assembly. Public feeling revolted against their continuance, and they were abolished almost by acclamation. The powers of the Commission of Subsistence and Provisions were greatly circumscribed; the right of making forced requisitions continued only for a month, and its army of ten thousand employes restricted to a few hundred. At the same time, the free circulation of gold and silver, which had been arrested by the Revolutionary government, was again permitted. The inextricable question of the assignats next occupied the attention of the Assembly; for the suffering produced by their depreciation had become absolutely intolerable to a large portion of the people. Being still a legal tender at par, all those who had money to receive lost eleven-twelfths of their property. The salaries of the public functionaries, and the payments to the public creditors, were to a certain degree augmented, but by no means in proportion to the depreciation of the paper. But this was a trifling remedy; the great evil still remained unmitigated in all payments between man and man over the whole country.¹

The only way of withdrawing the assignats from circulation, and in consequence enhancing their value, was by the sale of the national domains, when, according to the theory of their formation, they should be retired by government, and destroyed. But how were purchasers to be found? That was the eternal question which constantly recurred, and never could be answered. The same national convulsion which had confiscated two-thirds of the land of France belonging to the emigrants; the clergy, and the crown, had destroyed almost all the capital which could be employed in its purchase. Sales to any considerable extent were thus totally out of the question, the more especially as the estates thus brought

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36.

Reaction
against the
violent mea-
sures of the
Reign of
Terror.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 83,
112. Th.
vii. 236, 240.
Rapport de
Lindet sur
la situation
interieure
de la Rep.

37.

Inextricable
difficulty in
contracting
the assign-
ats.

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all at once to sale, consisted in great part of sumptuous palaces, woods, parks, and other domains, in circumstances, of all others, the worst adapted for a division among the industrial classes. It was not the capitals of a few shopkeepers and farmers which had escaped the general wreck that could produce any impression on such immense possessions. The difficulty, in truth, was inextricable; no sales to any extent went on: the assignments were continually increasing with the vast expenditure of government: and at length it was got over, as will appear in the sequel, by forced means, and the proclamation of a national bankruptcy of the very worst kind.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 212
Th. vii. 241,
242. Mig. ii.
403.

38.
Dreadful
scarcity in
Paris from
the abolition
of the forced
requisitions.

March 24.

But the attention of the Convention was soon drawn to evils of a still more pressing kind. The abolition of the *maximum* and of the forced requisitions, had deprived government of its violent means of feeding the citizens, while, in consequence of the shock which these tyrannical proceedings had given to industry, the usual sources of supply were almost dried up. The consequence was a most severe scarcity of every kind of provisions, which went on increasing during the whole of the winter of 1794-5, and at length, in March 1795, reached the most alarming height. To the natural evils of famine were superadded the horrors of a winter of uncommon severity, such as had not been experienced in Europe for a hundred years. The roads, covered with ice, were impassable for carriages; the canals were frozen up; and the means of subsistence to the metropolis seemed to be totally exhausted. In this extremity every family endeavoured to lay in stores for a few days, and the few convoys which approached Paris were besieged by crowds of famishing citizens, who proceeded twenty and thirty miles to anticipate the ordinary supplies. Nothing remained for government, who still adhered, though with weakened powers, to the system of distributing food to the people, but to diminish the rations daily issued; and on the report of Boissy d'Anglas, the quantity served out from the public magazines was diminished to one-half, or a pound of bread a-day for each person above the working classes, and a pound and a half to those actually engaged in labour.²

² Deux
Amis, xiv.
99, 108.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 261.
Th. vii. 246,
248. Lac.
xii. 192.

At this rate, there was daily distributed to the 636,000

inhabitants of the capital, eighteen hundred and ninety-seven casks of flour. But small as this quantity was, it was soon found necessary to reduce it still further; and at length, for several weeks, each citizen received only *two ounces* of black and coarse bread a-day. Small as this pittance was, it could be obtained only by soliciting tickets from the committees of government, and after waiting at the doors of the bakers from eleven at night till seven in the morning, during the rigour of an arctic winter. The citizens of Paris were for months reduced to the horrors of a besieged town; numbers perished of famine, and many owed their existence to the kindness of some friend in the country, and the introduction of the potato, which already began to assuage this artificial, as it has so often since done the most severe natural scarcities.¹

The abolition of the *maximum*, of the requisitions, and of all the forced methods of procuring supplies, produced, as might have been anticipated, a most violent reaction on the price of every article of consumption, and, by consequence, on the value of the assignats. Foreign commerce having begun to revive with the cessation of the Reign of Terror, sales being no longer forced, the assignat was brought into comparison with the currency of other countries, and its enormous inferiority precipitated still further its fall. The rapidity of its decline gave rise to numerous speculations on the exchange of Paris; and the people, in the midst of the horrors of famine, were exasperated by the sight of fortunes made out of the misery which they endured. Government, to provide for the necessities of the inhabitants, had no other resource but to increase the issue of assignats for the purchase of provisions; three milliards more of francs (£120,000,000) were issued for this necessary purpose, and the consequence was, that the paper money fell almost to nothing. Bread was exposed for sale at twenty-two francs the pound, and what formerly cost 100 francs, was now raised to 4000. In the course of the year the depreciation became such, that 28,000 francs in paper were exchanged for a louis d'or, and a dinner for five or six persons cost 60,000 francs in assignats.² A kind of despair seized every mind at such prodigious and apparently interminable losses, and it was the force of this feeling which produced the great revolts

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39.
Miserable
fare and
sufferings of
the people.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 260,
261. Th.
vii. 246, 252.
Lac. xii. 191.
193. Deuz
Amis, xiv.
24, 26.

40.
Enormous
depreciation
in the value
of the assignats, and
public despair in consequence.

² Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 261.
Deuz Amis,
xiv. 28, 29.
Th. vii. 376,
381. Lac,
xiii. 40.

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41.
Changes in
the laws
June and
July.

¹ Th. vii.
419, 420.
Lac. xiii. 43.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 1,
12.

42.
Vain mea-
sures of the
government
to arrest the
evil.

meux
Amis, xiv.
28, 29. Hist.
Parl. xxxvii
12, 36. Th.
viii. 85, 86.
Lac xiii. 32,
46

already mentioned, which had so nearly proved fatal to the Thermidorians, and restored the whole forced system of the Reign of Terror.

The overthrow of this insurrection led to several laws which powerfully tended to diminish the destructive ascendancy of the people in the government. The National Guards were reorganised on the footing on which they had been before the 10th August; the labouring and poorer classes excluded, and the service confined to the more substantial citizens. At Paris this important force was placed under the orders of the military committee. The government got quit at the same time of a burdensome and ruinous custom, which the Convention had borrowed from the Athenian Democracy, of allowing every indigent citizen fifty sous a-day, while they were engaged at their respective Sections; a direct premium on idleness, and a constant inducement to the turbulent and restless to assemble at these great centres of democratic power. The churches were restored to the anxious wishes of the Catholics, on the condition that they should maintain them themselves; the first symptom of a return to religious feeling in that infidel age.¹

All the evils, the necessary result of an excessive and forced paper circulation, went on increasing after the government, which had returned to moderate measures, was installed in power. Subsistence was constantly wanting in the great towns; the treasury was empty of all but assignats; the great bulk of the national domains remained unsold; the transactions, debts, and properties of individuals were involved in inextricable confusion. Sensible of the necessity of doing something for those who were paid in the government paper, the Directory adopted a scale by which the assignats were taken as worth a fifth of their nominal value; but this was an inconsiderable relief, as they had fallen to a *hundred-and-fiftieth* part of the sum for which they had been originally issued. The consequence of this excessive depreciation in a paper which was still a legal tender, was, that the whole debts of individuals were extinguished by a payment worth nothing; that the income of the fundholders was annihilated;² and the state itself, compelled to receive its own paper in payment of the taxes, found the treasury

filled with a mass of sterile assignats. But for the half of the land-tax, which was received in kind, the government would have been literally without the means either of feeding Paris or the armies.

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Hitherto the reaction had been in favour of constitutional and moderate measures; but the last great victory over the Jacobins revived the hopes of the Royalists. The emigrants and the clergy had returned in great numbers since the repeal of the severe laws passed against them during the Reign of Terror, and contributed powerfully to incline the public mind to a moderate and constitutional monarchy. The horror excited by the sanguinary proceedings of the Jacobins was so strong and universal, that the reaction naturally was in favour of a Royalist government. The recent successes of the *Troupe Dorée*, who formed the flower of the youth of Paris, had awakened in them a strong *esprit de corps*, and prepared the great and inert body of the people to follow a banner which had so uniformly led to victory. So strong was the feeling at that period from recent and grievous experience of the danger of popular tumults, that, after the disarming of the *Faubourgs*, several sections made a voluntary surrender of their artillery to the government. A large body of troops of the line, supported by a considerable train of artillery, was brought to Paris, and encamped in the plain of Sablons; and the galleries of the Assembly were closed except to persons having tickets of admission. The language of the deputations of the Sections at the bar of the Convention became openly hostile to the dominion of the people, and such as would a few months earlier have been a sure passport to the scaffold. "Experience," said the deputies of the Section Lepelletier, "has taught us that the despotism of the people is as insupportable as the tyranny of kings." The Revolutionary Tribunal, at the same period, was abolished by a decree of the Convention. A journal of the day observed, "Such was the tranquil and bloodless end of the most atrocious institution, of which, since the Council of Blood, established by the Duke of Alva in the Low Countries, the history of tribunals, instruments of injustice, has preserved the remembrance."¹

43
Further progress of humane measures, and abolition of the Revolutionary Tribunal.

June 17.
¹ Toul. v. 263, 170
Th. viii. 20,
21. Hist.
Parl. xxxvii.
66, 75.

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44.

Formation
of a new
constitu-
tion.

During this revolution of public opinion, the Convention was engaged in the formation of a Constitution. It is in the highest degree both curious and instructive to contemplate the altered doctrines which prevailed after the consequences of popular government had been experienced, and how generally men reverted to those principles which, in the commencement of the Revolution, were stigmatised as slavish and disgraceful. Boissy d'Anglas was chosen to make a report upon the form of the Constitution; his memoir contains much important truth, which preceding events had forced upon the observation of mankind. "Hitherto," said he, "the efforts of France had been solely directed to destroy; at present, when we are neither silenced by the oppression of tyrants, nor intimidated by the cries of demagogues, we must turn to our advantage the crimes of the monarchy, the errors of the Assembly, the horrors of the Decemviral tyranny, the calamities of anarchy. Absolute equality is a chimera; virtue, talents, physical or intellectual powers, are not equally distributed by nature. Property alone attaches the citizen to his country; all who are to have any share in the legislature should be possessed of some independent income. All Frenchmen are citizens; but the state of domestic service, pauperism, or the non-payment of taxes, forbid the great majority from exercising their rights. The Executive government requires a central position, a disposable force, a display calculated to strike the vulgar. The people should never be permitted to deliberate indiscriminately on public affairs; a populace constantly deliberating rapidly perishes by misery and disorder; the laws should never be submitted to the consideration of the multitude." Such were the principles ultimately adopted by the Revolutionary Assembly of France. In a few years, centuries of experience had been acquired.¹

¹Rapport de Boissy d'Anglas sur la Constitution. Toul. v. 272, 273. Hist. Parl. xxxvii. 34.

If such was the language of the Convention, it may easily be conceived how much more powerful was the reaction among the middle classes of the people. The National Guard, and the *Jeunesse Dorée* of several Sections, had become open Royalists. They wore the green and black uniform which distinguished the Chouans of the western provinces; the Réveil du Peuple was beginning to awaken the dormant, not extinguished, loyalty of the

French people. The name of *Terrorist* had become in many places the signal for proscriptions as perilous as that of *Aristocrat* had formerly been. In the south, especially, the reaction was terrible. Bands, bearing the names of the "Companies of Jesus," and the "Companies of the Sun," traversed the country, executing the most dreadful reprisals upon the revolutionary party. At Lyons, Aix, Tarascon, and Marseilles, they massacred the prisoners without either trial or discrimination; the 2d of September was repeated with all its horrors in most of the prisons of the south of France. At Lyons, after the first massacre of the Terrorists, they pursued the wretches through the streets, and when any one was seized, he was instantly thrown into the Rhone; at Tarascon, the captives were cast headlong from the top of a lofty rock into that rapid stream. One prison at Lyons was set on fire by the infuriated mob, and the unhappy inmates all perished in the flames. The people, exasperated by the blood which had been shed by the revolutionary party, were insatiable in their vengeance; they invoked the name of a parent, brother, or sister, when retaliating on their oppressors; and while committing murder themselves, exclaimed, with every stroke, "Die, assassins!" History must equally condemn such horrors by whomsoever committed; but it must reserve its severest censure for those by whom they were first perpetrated.¹

Many innocent persons perished, as in all popular tumults, during those bloody days. The two sons of the Duke of Orleans, the Duke de Montpensier, and the Count Beaujolais, were confined in the Fort of St John at Marseilles, where they had been forgot during the Reign of Terror. On the 6th June, a terrible noise round the fort announced the approach of the frantic multitude. The cries of the victims in the adjoining cells too soon informed them of the danger which they ran; Royalists and Jacobins were indiscriminately murdered by the bloody assassins. Isnard and Cardroi at length put a stop to the massacres, but not before eighty persons had been murdered. The former, though he strove to moderate the savage measures of the Royalists, increased their fury by the fearful energy of his language. "We want arms," said the young men who were marching against the

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45.

General abandonment of democratic principles from the force of experience, and violent reaction in the south of France.

¹ Deux Amis, xiv. 44, 50. Hist. Parl. xxxvi. 417, 433. Lac xii. 210. Mig. ii. 382. Fréron, 9, 32, 73.

46.

Generous conduct of the Duke of Orleans' younger sons, and indulgence shown to the Jacobins.

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Jacobins of Toulon. "Take," said he, "the bones of your fathers to march against their murderers." The fate of these young Princes was in the highest degree interesting. Some months afterwards they formed a plan of escape; but the Duke de Montpensier, in descending the wall of the fort, broke his leg, was seized, and reconducted to prison. He consoled himself for his failure by the thoughts that his brother had succeeded, when he beheld him re-enter the cell, and fall upon his neck. Escaped from danger, and on the point of embarking on board a vessel destined for America, he had heard of the misfortune of his brother, and, unable to endure freedom without him, he had returned to prison to share his fate. They were both subsequently liberated, and reached America; but they soon died, the victims of a long and severe captivity of four years. During the predominance of these principles, upwards of eighty Jacobins were denounced in the Convention, and escaped execution only by secreting themselves in different parts of France. The only secure asylum which they found was in the houses of the Royalists, whom, during the days of their power, they had saved from the scaffold. Not one was betrayed by those to whom they fled. So predominant was the influence of the Girondists, that Louvet obtained a decree, ordering an expiatory fête for the victims of 31st May. None of the Thermidorians ventured to resist the proposal, though many amongst them had contributed in no inconsiderable degree to their fate.¹

¹ Lac. xii.
212, 216,
231. Deux
Amis, xv.
44, 49.

47.
Last days
and death
of Louis
XVII. in
prison, and
liberation of
the Duchess
d'Angou-
lême.

About the same time, the infant King of France, Louis XVII., expired. The 9th Thermidor came too late to save the life of this unfortunate prince. His savage jailer, Simon, was indeed beheaded, and a less cruel tyrant substituted in his place; but the temper of the times would not at first admit of any decided measures of indulgence in favour of the heir to the throne. The barbarous treatment he had experienced from Simon, had alienated his reason, but not extinguished his feelings of gratitude. On one occasion, that inhuman wretch had seized him by the hair, and threatened to dash his head against the wall; the surgeon, Naulin, interfered to prevent him, and the unhappy child next day presented him with two pears, which had been given him for his supper the preceding

evening, lamenting, at the same time, that he had no other means of testifying his gratitude. Simon and Hébert had put him to the torture, to extract from him an avowal of crimes connected with his mother, which he was too young to understand; after that cruel day, he almost always preserved silence, lest his words should prove fatal to some of his relations. This resolution, and the closeness of his confinement, soon preyed upon his health. In February 1795, he was seized with a fever, and visited by three Members of the Committee of General Salvation; they found him sitting at a little table, making castles of cards. They addressed to him the words of kindness, but could not obtain any answer. In May, the state of his health became so alarming, that the celebrated surgeon Dessault was directed by the Convention to visit him; his generous attentions assuaged the sufferings of his latter days, but could not prolong his life: he soon after died in prison. June 8.

The public sympathy was so strongly excited by this event, that it induced the Assembly to consent to the freedom of the remaining child of Louis XVI. On the 18th of June, June 18.

the Duchess d'Angoulême was liberated from the Temple, and exchanged for the four Commissioners of the Convention whom Dumourior had delivered up to the Austrians. She had owed her life, during the ascendancy of Robespierre, to a project which he was revolving in his mind, of marrying that unhappy princess, and thus uniting in his person the Revolutionary and Royalist parties.^{1*}

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Lac. xii.
369, 374,
383. Deux
Amis, xiv.
172, 173.

The fate of La Fayette, Latour Maubourg, and other eminent men who were detained in the Austrian prisons, since their defection from the armies of France, at this time excited the most ardent sympathy both in France and England. They had been rigorously guarded since their captivity in the fortress of Olmutz; and the humane in every part of the world beheld with regret men who had voluntarily delivered themselves up to avoid the excesses of a sanguinary faction, treated with more severity than prisoners of war. Mr Fox in vain endeavoured to induce the British government to interfere in their behalf; the

48.
Continued
captivity of
La Fayette,
and general
interest in
his behalf.

* "Dans ces tems cette jeune infortunée n'avait dû son salut qu'à l'ambition de Robespierre; et si sous la Règne de la Terreur elle n'avait point suivie sa famille à l'échafaud, c'est que ce monstre avait des vues sur elle, et se promettait de l'épouser pour affirmer sa puissance."—*Deux Amis*, xiv. 173.

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reply of Mr Pitt in the House of Commons equalled the speech of his eloquent rival, and nothing followed from the attempt. The wife and daughters of La Fayette, finding all attempts at his deliverance ineffectual, generously resolved to share his captivity; and they remained in confinement with him at Olmutz, till the victories of Napoleon in 1796 compelled the Austrian government to consent to their liberation. His imprisonment, however tedious, was probably the means of saving his life; it is hardly possible that in France he could have survived the Reign of Terror, or escaped the multitude which he had roused to revolution, and to whom he had long been the object of execration.¹

¹ Lac. x. 386,
387.

49.
Completion
of the new
constitu-
tion.

Meanwhile, the Convention proceeded rapidly with the formation of the new constitution. This was the *third* which had been imposed upon the French people during the space of a few years; a sufficient proof of the danger of incautiously overturning long-established institutions. But the constitution of 1795 was very different from those which had preceded it, and gave striking proof of the altered condition of the public mind on the state of political affairs. Experience had now taught all classes that the chimera of perfect equality could not be attained; that the mass of the people are unfit for the exercise of political rights; that the contests of factions terminate, if the people are victorious, in the supremacy of the most depraved. The constitution which was framed under the influence of these sentiments differed widely both from that struck out during the glowing fervour of 1789, or the democratic transports of 1793. The ruinous error was now acknowledged of uniting the whole legislative powers in one Assembly, and enacting the most important laws, without the intervention of any time to deliberate on their tendency, or recover from the excitement under which they may have originated. Guided by experience, France reversed its former judgment on the union of the orders in 1789, which had brought about the Revolution. The legislative power, therefore, was divided between two Councils, that of the *Five Hundred*, and that of the *Ancients*. The Council of Five Hundred was entrusted with the sole right of originating laws; that of the Ancients with the power of passing or rejecting them;² and to ensure the prudent discharge of this duty, no person could be a member of it

² Mig. ii.
385. Toul.
v. 404. Th.
viii. 13.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 485,
500.

till he had reached the age of forty years. No bill could pass till after it had been three times read, with an interval between each reading of at least five days.

The executive power, instead of being vested as heretofore in two committees, was lodged in the hands of Five Directors, nominated by the Council of Five Hundred, approved by that of the Ancients. They were liable to be impeached for their misconduct by the Councils. Each individual was by rotation to be President during three months; and every year a fifth new Director was to be chosen in lieu of one who was bound to retire. The Directory thus constituted had the entire disposal of the army and finances, the appointment of public functionaries, and the management of all public negotiations. They were lodged during the period of their official duty in the Palace of the Luxembourg, and attended by a guard of honour. The privilege of electing members for the legislature was taken away from the great body of the people, and confined to the colleges of delegates. Their meetings were called the *Primary Assemblies*; and, in order to ensure the influence of the middle ranks, the persons elected by the Primary Assemblies were themselves the electors of the members of the legislature. All popular societies were interdicted, and the press declared absolutely free.¹

It is of importance to recollect that this constitution, so cautiously framed to exclude the direct influence of the people, and curb the excesses of popular licentiousness, was the voluntary work of the very Convention which had come into power under the democratic constitution of 1793, and immediately *after* the 10th August; which had voted the death of the king, the imprisonment of the Girondists, and the execution of Danton; which had supported the bloody excesses of the Decemvirs, and survived the horrors of the reign of Robespierre. Let it no longer be said, therefore, that the evils of popular rule are imaginary dangers, contradicted by the experience of mankind. The checks thus imposed upon the power of the people were the work of their own delegates, chosen by universal suffrage during a period of unexampled public excitation, whose proceedings had been marked by a more violent love of freedom than any that ever existed from

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50.
The constitution of the Directory.

¹ Hist. Parl. xxxvii. 485, 494. Mig. ii. 385, 387. Th. vii. 14, 15. Toul. v. 399.

51.
Reflections on this constitution.

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the beginning of the world. Nothing can speak so strongly in favour of the necessity of controlling the people, as the work of the representatives whom they had themselves chosen, without exception, under the influence of the most vehement excitement, to confirm their power.

52.
Great agitation in Paris, and throughout France at these changes.

¹ Delib. de l'Assemblée Prim. de Lepelletier, 7. Sept. Hist. Parl. xxxvii. 20, 21. Toul. v. 327, 328, 330. Th. viii. 16, 19. Mig. ii. 388, 389. Lac. xii. 402, 403.

53.
Coalition of Royalists with sections of National Guard.

² Hist. Parl. xxxvii. 23, 27. Lac. xii. 404. Toul. v. 331, 333. Th. viii. 20, 22, 23. Mig. ii. 389.

The formation of this constitution, and its discussion in the assemblies of the people, to which it was submitted for consideration, excited the most violent agitation throughout France. Paris, as usual, took the lead. Its forty-eight sections were incessantly assembled, and the public effervescence resembled that of 1789. This was brought to its height by a decree of the Assembly, declaring that *two-thirds* of the present Convention should form a part of the new legislature, and that the electors should only fill up the remaining part. The citizens beheld with horror so large a proportion of a body, whose proceedings had deluged France with blood, still destined to reign over them. To accept the constitution, and reject this decree, seemed the only way of getting free from their domination. The Thermidorian party had been entirely excluded from the Committee of *Eleven*, to whom the formation of the new constitution was entrusted, and in revenge they joined the assemblies of those who sought to counteract the ambition of the Convention. The focus of the effervescence was the section Lepelletier, formerly known by the name of that of the *Filles de St Thomas*, the richest and most powerful in Paris, which, through all the changes of the Revolution, had steadily adhered to Royalist principles.¹

The Royalist Committee of Paris, of which Le Maître was the known agent, which had still existed through all the horrors of the Revolution, finding matters brought to this crisis, coalesced with the journals and the leaders of the sections. They openly accused the Convention of attempting to perpetuate its power, and of aiming at usurping the sovereignty of the people. The orators of the sections said at the bar of the Assembly, "Deserve our choice, do not seek to command it; you have exercised an authority without bounds; you have united in yourselves all the powers—those of making laws, of revising them, of changing them, of executing them. Recollect how fatal military despotism was to the Roman republic."² The press of Paris teemed with pamphlets, inveighing against

the ambitious views of the legislature ; and the efforts of the sections were incessant to defeat their projects. The agitation of 1789 was renewed, but it was all now on the other side ; the object now was, ~~not~~ to restrain the tyranny of the court, but to repress the ambition of the delegates of the people.

“ Will the Convention,” said the Royalist orators, “ never be satisfied ? • Is a reign of three years, fraught with more crimes than the whole annals of twenty other nations, not sufficient for those who rose into power under the auspices of the 10th August and the 2d September ? Is that power fit to repose under the shadow of the laws, which has only lived in tempests ? Let us not be deceived by the 9th Thermidor ; the bay of Quiberon, where Tallien bore so conspicuous a part, may show us that the thirst for blood is not extinguished, even among those who overthrew Robespierre. The Convention has done nothing but destroy : shall we now entrust it with the work of conservation ? What reliance can be placed on the monstrous coalition between the proscribers and the proscribed ? Irreconcilable enemies to each other, they have only entered into this semblance of alliance in order to resist those who hate them—that is, every man in France. It is we ourselves who have forced upon them those acts of tardy humanity on which they now rely as a veil to their monstrous proceedings. But for our warm representations, the members *hors la loi* would still have been wandering in exile, the seventy-three deputies still languishing in prison. Who but ourselves formed the faithful guard which saved them from the terrible Faubourgs, to whom they had basely yielded their best members on the 31st May ? They now call upon us to select among its ranks those who should continue members, and form the two-thirds of the new Assembly. Can two-thirds of the Convention be found who are not stained with blood ? Can we ever forget that many of its basest acts passed *unanimously*, and that a majority of three hundred and sixty-one concurred in a vote which will be an eternal subject of mourning to France ? Shall we admit a majority of regicides into the new assembly, entrust our liberty to cowards, our fortunes to the authors of so many acts of rapine, our lives to murderers ?¹ The Convention is only

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54.

Vehement
Royalist de-
clamations
at the sec-
tions.

¹ Lac. xii.
406, 409.

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55.
Extreme
agitation
at Paris.

strong because it mixes up its crimes with the glories of our armies. Let us separate them; let us leave the Convention its sins, and our soldiers their triumphs, and the world will speedily do justice to both."

Such discourses, incessantly repeated from the tribunes of forty-eight sections, violently shook the public mind in the capital. To give greater publicity to their opinions, the orators repeated the same sentiments in addresses at the bar of the Assembly, which were immediately circulated with rapidity through the departments. The effervescence in the south was at its height; many important cities and departments seemed already disposed to imitate the sections of the metropolis. The towns of Dreux and Chartres warmly seconded their wishes; the sections of Orleans sent the following message:—"Primary assemblies of Paris, Orleans is at your side; it advances on the same line; let your cry be resistance to oppression, hatred to usurpers, and we will second you." The National Guard of Paris shared in the general excitement. The bands of the *Jeunesse Dorée* had inspired its members with part of their own exultation of feeling, and diminished much of their wonted timidity. Resistance to the tyrants was openly spoken of; the Convention compared to the Long Parliament which shed the blood of Charles I.; and the assistance of a Monk ardently looked for to consummate the work of restoration.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxviii. 14,
34. Lac.
xii. 414.
Th. viii. 22,
23.

56.
Convention
throw them-
selves on the
army.

Surrounded by so many dangers, the Convention did not abate of its former energy. They had lost the Jacobins by their proscriptions, the Royalists by their ambition. What remained? THE ARMY; and this terrible engine they resolved to employ, as the only means of prolonging their power. They lost no time in submitting the constitution to the soldiers, and by them it was unanimously adopted. Military men, accustomed to obey, and to take the lead from others, usually, except in periods of uncommon excitement, adopt any constitution which is recommended to them by their officers. The officers, all raised during the fervour of 1793, and in great part strangers to the horrors which had alienated so large a part of the population of Paris from the Revolution,² eagerly supported a constitution which promised to continue the *régime* under which they had risen to the stations

² Lac. xii.
414, 415.
Th. viii. 35,
36. Mig. ii.
390.

they now occupied. A body of five thousand regular troops was assembled in the neighbourhood of Paris, and their adhesion to the constitution eagerly announced to the citizens. The Convention called to their support the Prætorian Guards; they little thought how soon they were to receive from them a master.

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It soon appeared that not only the armies, but a large majority of the departments had accepted the constitution. The inhabitants of Paris, however, accustomed to take the lead in all public measures, were not discouraged; the Section Lepelletier unanimously passed a resolution, "That the powers of every constituted authority ceased in presence of the assembled people;" and a provisional government, under the name of a Central Committee, was established under the auspices of its leaders. A majority of the Sections adopted their resolution, which was immediately annulled by the Convention, and their decree was, in its turn, reversed by the Assemblies of the Electors. The contest now became open between the Sections and the Legislature; the former separated the constitution from the decrees ordaining the re-election of two-thirds of the old Assembly; they accepted the former, and rejected the latter. On the 3d October, (11th Vendemiaire,) it was resolved by the Sections, that the electors chosen by the people should be assembled at the Théâtre Français, under protection of the National Guard; and on the 3d they were conducted there by an armed force of chasseurs and grenadiers. The danger of an insurrection against a government having at its command the military force of France, was apparent; but the enthusiasm of the moment overbalanced all other considerations.¹

57.
Sections
openly re-
solve to
revolt.
Oct. 2.

Oct. 3.
¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 27,
33. Mig. ii.
390, 391.
Lac. xii. 415.
Th. viii. 26,
29, 30. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 368, 369.

On the one side it was urged, "Are we about to consecrate, by our example, that odious principle of insurrections which so many bloody days have rendered hateful? Our enemies alone are skilled in revolt; the art of exciting them is unknown to us. The multitude is indifferent to our cause; deprived of their aid, how can we face the government? If they join our ranks, how shall we restrain their sanguinary excesses? Should we prove victorious, what dynasty shall we establish? What chiefs can we present to the armies? Is there not too much reason to fear that success would only revive divisions now happily

58.
Meeting of
the electors
at the
Théâtre
Français,
when resist-
ance is re-
solved on.

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forgotten, and give our enemies the means of profiting by our discord?" But to this it was replied,—“Honour forbids us to recede; duty calls upon us to restore freedom to our country, his throne to our monarch. We may now, by seizing the decisive moment, accomplish that which former patriots sought in vain to achieve. The 9th Thermidor only destroyed a tyrant; now tyranny itself is to be overthrown. If our names are now obscure, they will no longer remain so; we shall acquire a glory of which even the brave Vendéans shall be envious. Let us Dare: that is the watchword in Revolutions: may it for once be employed on the side of order and freedom. The Convention will never forgive our outrages; the revolutionary tyranny, curbed for more than a year by our exertions, will rise up with renewed vigour for our destruction, if we do not anticipate its vengeance by delivering ourselves.” Moved by these considerations, the Sections unanimously resolved upon resistance. The National Guard amounted to above thirty thousand men; but it was totally destitute of artillery; the Sections having, in the belief that they were no further required, delivered up the pieces with which they had been furnished in 1789, upon the final disarming of the insurgent Faubourgs. Their want was now severely felt, as the Convention had fifty pieces at their command, stationed at Sablons near Paris, whose terrible efficacy had been abundantly proved on the 10th August; and the cannoniers who were to serve them were the same who had broken the lines of Prince Cobourg. The National Guard hoped, by a rapid advance, to capture this formidable train of artillery, and then the victory was secure.¹

¹ Lac. xii.
391, 419.

59.
Measures of
the Conven-
tion.
Failure of
Menou, and
appointment
of Napoleon.
Oct. 3.

The leaders of the Convention, on their side, were not idle. In the evening of the 3d October, (11th Vendémiaire,) a decree was passed, ordering the immediate dissolution of the electoral bodies in Paris, and embodying into a regiment fifteen hundred of the Jacobins, many of whom were liberated from the prisons for that especial purpose. These measures brought matters to a crisis between the sections and the government. This decree was openly resisted, and the National Guard having assembled in force to protect the electors at the Théâtre Français, the Convention ordered the military to dispossess them. General Menou was

appointed commander of the armed force, and he advanced with the troops of the line to surround the Convent des Filles de St Thomas, the centre of the insurrection, where the Section Lepelletier was assembled. Menou, however, had not the decision requisite for success in civil contests. Instead of attacking the insurgents, he entered into a negotiation with them, and retired in the evening without having effected any thing. His failure gave all the advantages of a victory to the sections; the National Guard mustered in greater strength than ever, and resolved to attack the Convention at its place of assembly on the following day. Informed of this failure, and the dangerous excitement which it had produced in Paris, the Convention, at eleven at night, dismissed General Menou, and gave the command of the armed force, with unlimited powers, to General Barras. He immediately demanded the assistance, as second in command, of a young officer of artillery, who had distinguished himself at the siege of Toulon and in the war in the Maritime Alps,—**NAPOLÉON BUONAPARTE**.¹

This young officer was immediately introduced to the Committee. His manner was timid and embarrassed; the career of public life was as yet new; but his clear and distinct opinions, the energy and force of his language, already indicated the powers of his mind. By his advice, the powerful train of artillery in the plain of Sablons, consisting of fifty pieces, was immediately brought by a lieutenant, afterwards well known in military annals, named **MURAT**, to the capital, and disposed in such a position as to command all the avenues to the Convention. Early on the following morning, the neighbourhood of the Tuileries resembled a great intrenched camp. The line of defence extended from the Pont Neuf, along the quays of the river to the Pont Louis XV.: the Place de Carrousel, and the Louvre, were filled with cannon, and the entrances of all the streets which open into the Rue St Honoré were strongly guarded. In this position the commanders of the Convention awaited the attack of the insurgents. Napoleon was indefatigable in his exertions to inspire the troops with confidence: he visited every post, inspected every battery, and spoke to the men with that decision and confidence which is so often the prelude to victory.²

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¹ Hist. Parl. xxxvii. 37, 39. Mig. ii. 391, 392. Lac. xii. 421, 434. Th. viii. 35, 39. Deux Amis, xiii. 374, 385.

60.
His decisive measures in seizing the artillery.

² Deux Amis, xiii. 383, 391. Mig. ii. 393. Nap. ii. 267, and iii. 70, 74. Th. viii. 40, 41, 42. Hist. de la Conv. iv. 383.

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61.

Combat
round the
Tuileries.
Defeat of
the sections.

The action was soon commenced. Above thirty thousand men, under Generals Danican and Duhoux, surrounded the little army of six thousand, who, with this powerful artillery, defended the seat of the legislature. The combat began in the Rue St Honoré at half-past four; the grenadiers, placed on the Church of St Roch, opened a fire of musketry on the cannoniers of the Convention, who replied by a discharge of grape-shot, which swept destruction through the serried ranks of the National Guard which occupied the Rue St Honoré. Though the insurgents fought with the most determined bravery, and the fire from the Church of St Roch was well sustained, nothing could resist the murderous grape-shot of the regular soldiers. Many of the cannoniers fell at their guns, but the fire of their pieces was not diminished. In a few minutes the Rue St Honoré was deserted, and the flying columns carried confusion into the ranks of the reserve, who were formed near the Church of the Filles de St Thomas. General Danican galloped off at the first discharge, and never appeared again during the day. Meanwhile, the Pont Neuf was carried by the insurgents, and a new column, ten thousand strong, advanced along the opposite quay to the Tuileries, to attack the Pont Royal. Napoleon allowed them to advance within twenty yards of his batteries, and then opened his fire; the insurgents stood three discharges without flinching; but not having resolution enough to rush upon the cannon after they were fired, they were ultimately driven back in disorder, and by seven o'clock the victory of the Convention was complete at all points. At nine, the troops of the line carried the posts of the National Guard in the Palais Royal, and on the following morning the Section Lepelletier was disarmed, and the insurgents every where submitted.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 53,
57. Deux
Ainis, xlii.
394, 399.
Mig. ii. 394,
395. Lac.
xii. 436, 441.
Th. viii. 42,
50. Toul.
v. 66, 368.
Nap. i. 70,
78. Bour.
i. 90, 96.

62.

Establish-
ment of
military
despotism.

Such was the result of the LAST INSURRECTION of the people in the French Revolution; all the subsequent changes were effected by the government, or the armies, without their interference. The insurgents were not the rabble or the assassins who had so long stained its history with blood; they were the flower of the citizens of Paris, comprising all that the Revolution had left that was generous, or elevated, or noble in the capital. They were over-

thrown, not by the superior numbers or courage of their adversaries, but by the terrible effect of their artillery, by the power of military discipline, and the genius of that youthful conqueror before whom all the armies of Europe were destined to fall. The moral strength of the nation was all on their side ; but in revolutions, it is seldom that moral strength proves ultimately victorious ; and the examples of Cæsar and Cromwell are not required to show that the natural termination of civil strife is military despotism.

The Convention made a generous use of their victory. The Girondists, who exercised an almost unlimited sway over its members, put in practice those maxims of clemency which they had so often recommended to others ; the officers who had gained the victory, felt a strong repugnance to their laurels being stained with the blood of their fellow-citizens. Few executions followed this decisive victory : M. Lafont, one of the military chiefs of the revolt, obstinately resisting the means of evasion which were suggested to him by the court, was alone condemned, and died with a firmness worthy of the cause for which he suffered. Most of the accused persons were allowed time to escape, and sentence of 'outlawry merely recorded against them ; many returned shortly after to Paris, and resumed their place in public affairs. The clemency of Napoleon was early conspicuous ; his counsels, after the victory, were all on the side of mercy, and his intercession saved General Menou from a military commission.¹

In the formation of the Councils of Five Hundred and of the Ancients, the Convention made no attempt to constrain the public wishes. The third of the legislature, who had been newly elected, were almost all on the side of the insurgents, and even contained several Royalists ; and a proposal was in consequence made by Tallien, that the election of that third should be annulled, and another appeal made to the people. Thibaudeau, with equal firmness and eloquence, resisted the proposal, which was rejected by the Assembly. They merely took the precaution, to prevent a return to royalty, to name for the Directors five persons who had voted for the death of the king—Lareveillere, Rewbell, Letourneur, Barras, and Carnot.² Having thus settled the new government, they

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63.

Humanity of the Convention after their victory.

¹ Hist. Parl. xxxvii. 59, 72. Th. viii. 66. Lac. xii. 441. Mig. ii. 395. Hist. de la Conv. iv. 387, 390.

64.

Election of the Council of Ancients and the Five Hundred.

² Deux Amis, xv. 399, 404. Mig. ii. 396. Lac. xii. 444. Thib. ii. 12, 13. Th. viii. 65, 67. Hist. de la Conv. iv. 389.

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published a general amnesty, changed the name of the Place de la Revolution into that of Place de la Concorde, and declared their sittings terminated. The last days of an Assembly stained with so much blood, were gilded by an act of clemency, of which Thibaudeau justly said the annals of kings furnished few examples.

65.
Reflections
on the his-
tory of the
Convention.

The Convention sat for more than three years; from the 21st September 1791, to the 26th October 1795. During that long and terrible period, its precincts were rather the field on which faction strove for ascendancy, than the theatre on which legislative wisdom exerted its influence. The destruction of human life which took place during its government, in civil dissension, was unparalleled: it amounted to above A MILLION of human beings! All the parties which divided France there endeavoured to establish their power, and all perished in the attempt. The Girondists attempted it, and perished; the Mountain attempted it, and perished; the Municipality attempted it, and perished; Robespierre attempted it, and perished; the Royalists attempted it, and perished. In revolutions, it is easy to destroy; the difficulty is to establish and secure. All the experience of years of suffering, fraught with centuries of instruction; all the wisdom of age, all the talent of youth, were unable to form one stable government. A few years, often a few months, were sufficient to overturn the most apparently stable institutions. A fabric seemingly framed for eternal duration, disappeared almost before its authors had consummated their work. The gales of popular favour, ever fickle and changeable, deserted each successive faction as it rose into power; and the ardent part of the nation, impatient of control, deemed any approach to regular government insupportable tyranny. The lower classes, incapable of rational thought, gave their support to the different parties only as long as they continued to inveigh against their superiors; when they became those superiors themselves, they passed over to their enemies.¹

¹ Mig. ii.
397. Prud-
homme,
Viet. de la
Rév. vi. 522.
Table 7

66.
Slow growth
of all du-
rable human
institutions.

Human institutions are not like the palace of the architect, framed according to fixed rules, capable of erection in any situation, and certain in the effect to be produced. They resemble rather the trees of the forest, slow of growth, tardy of development, readily susceptible of destruction.

An instant will destroy what it has taken centuries to produce ; centuries must again elapse before in the same situation a similar production can be formed. Transplantation, difficult in the vegetable, is impossible in the moral world ; the seedling must be nourished in the soil, inured to the climate, hardened by the winds. Many examples are to be found of institutions being suddenly imposed upon a people ; none of those so formed having any duration. To be adapted to their character and habits, they must have grown with their growth, and strengthened with their strength.

The progress of improvement is irresistible. Feudal tyranny must give way in an age of increasing opulence, and the human mind cannot be for ever enchained by the fetters of superstition. No efforts of power could have *prevented* a change in the government of France ; but they might have altered its character and checked its horrors. Nature has ordained that mankind should, when they are fit for it, be free ; but she has not ordained that they should reach this freedom steeped in blood. Although, therefore, the overthrow of the despotic government and modification of the power of the privileged orders of France was inevitable, yet the dreadful atrocities with which their fall was attended might have been averted by human wisdom. The life of the monarch might have been saved instead of sacrificed ; the constitution modified, without being subverted ; the aristocracy purified, without being destroyed. Timely concession from the Crown, perhaps, might have altered the character of the French Revolution. Had Louis, in the commencement of the troubles, yielded the great and reasonable demands of the people, and the nobility permitted him to carry his intentions into effect ; had he been allowed to grant them equality of taxation, the power of voting subsidies, freedom from arrest, and periodical parliaments, the agitation of the moment might have been allayed, and an immediate collision between the throne and the people prevented. At a subsequent period, indeed, increasing demands, and the want of more extended privileges, might have arisen ; but these discontents, being turned into a regular and legal channel, would probably have found vent without destroying the state. When the floods are out, safety is to

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67.

Reflections
on the his-
tory of the
Revolution,
and the
causes of its
disasters.

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be found only in providing early and effectual means for letting off the superfluous waters, and, at the same time, strengthening the barriers against their further encroachment.

68.
Ruinous
effect of
Necker's
duplication
of the Tiers
Etat.

But although the gradual concession of power, and the redress of all *real* grievances before the Revolution, would have been not less politic than just, nothing can be clearer than that the sudden and vast accession of importance conferred by M. Necker on the *Tiers Etat*, by the duplication of their numbers, without any decision as to the voting by head or by order, was to the last degree prejudicial, and was, in fact, the immediate cause of the Revolution. Such a sudden addition, like the instantaneous emancipation of slaves, cannot but prove destructive, not only to the higher classes but to the lower. The powers of freedom can only be borne by those who have gradually become habituated to them; those who acquire them suddenly, by their intemperate use speedily fall under a worse despotism than that from which they revolted. By the consequences of this sudden and uncalled-for innovation, the Commons of France threw off the beneficent reign of a reforming monarch, fell under the iron grasp of the Committee of Public Salvation, were constrained to tremble under the bloody sway of Robespierre, and fawn upon the military sceptre of Napoleon.

69.
Dreadful
effect of the
emigration
of the no-
blesse.

No lesson is more strongly impressed upon the mind by the progress of the French Revolution, than the disastrous consequences which followed the desertion of their country by the higher orders, and the wonderful effects which might have resulted from a determined resistance on their part to the first actual outrages of the people. Nearly a hundred thousand emigrants fled from France, at a time when a few hundred resolute men might have saved the monarchy from destruction. La Fayette, with five battalions of the National Guard, vanquished the Jacobins in the Champ-de-Mars in the most fervent period of the Revolution: had he marched against their club, and been vigorously supported, the Reign of Terror would have been prevented. Five hundred horse would have enabled the Swiss Guard to have saved the throne on the 10th August, and subdue an insurrection which deluged the kingdom with blood. Three thousand of the troops of the sections overthrew

Robespierre at the zenith of his power ; a body of undisciplined young men chased the Jacobins from the streets, and rooted out their den of wickedness : Napoleon, with six thousand regular soldiers, vanquished the National Guard of Paris, and crushed an insurrection headed by the whole moral strength of France. These examples may convince us what can be accomplished by a small body of resolute men in civil convulsions ; their physical power is almost irresistible ; their moral influence commands success. One-tenth part of the emigrants who fled from France, if properly headed and disciplined, would have been sufficient to have curbed the fury of the populace in Paris, crushed the ambition of the reckless, and prevented the Reign of Terror.¹

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1 Burke, vi.
237.

No doubt can now exist that the interference of the Allies augmented the horrors, and added to the duration of the Revolution. All its bloodiest excesses were committed during, or after, an alarming but unsuccessful invasion by the allied forces. The massacres of September 2d were perpetrated when the public mind was excited to the highest degree, by the near approach of the Duke of Brunswick ; and the worst days of the government of Robespierre, were immediately after the defection of Dumourier, and the battle of Nerwinde, threatened the rule of the Jacobins with destruction. Nothing but a sense of public danger could have united the factions who then strove with so much exasperation against each other ; the peril of France alone could have induced the people to submit to the sanguinary rule which so long desolated its plains. The Jacobins maintained their ascendancy by constantly representing their cause as that of national independence, by stigmatising their enemies as the enemies of the country ; and the patriots wept and suffered in silence, lest by resistance they should weaken the state, and cause France to be erased from among the nations.

70.
Effects of
the allied in-
terference.

In combating a revolution, one of two courses must be followed ; either to advance with vigour, and crush the hydra in its cradle, or to leave the factions to contend with each other, and trust for safety to the reaction which crime and suffering necessarily produce.* The suppression of the

71.
Causes of
the disasters
it induced.

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

Spanish Revolution by the Duke d'Angoulême in 1823, is an example of the success of the first system : the bloodless restoration of the English monarchs, in 1660, a proof of the wisdom of the second. To advance with menaces, and recoil with shame ; to awaken resistance and not extinguish opposition ; to threaten and not execute, is the most ruinous course that can possibly be adopted. It is to unite faction by community of danger ; to convert revolutionary energy into military power ; to strengthen the hands of crime by giving it the support of virtue. Ignorance of the new element which was acting in human affairs, may extenuate the fatal errors committed by the European powers in the first years of the Revolutionary war ; no excuse will hereafter remain for a repetition of the mistake.

72.
Dreadful
retribution
endured by
France.

But it is not with impunity that such sins as disgraced the Revolution can be committed by any people. The actors in the bloody tragedy almost all destroyed each other ; their crimes led to their natural and condign punishment, in rendering them the first victims of the passions which they had unchained. But a signal and awful retribution was also due to the nation which had suffered these iniquities, which had permitted such torrents of innocent blood to flow, and spread the bitterness of domestic suffering to such an unparalleled extent throughout the land. These crimes were registered in the book of fate ; the anguish they had brought on others was speedily felt by themselves ; the tears they had caused to flow were washed out in the torrents which fell from guilty eyes.* France was decimated for her cruelty ; for twenty years the flower of her youth was marched away by a relentless power to the harvest of death ; the snows of Russia revenged the guillotine of Paris. Allured by the phantom of military glory, they fell down and worshipped the power which was consuming them ; they followed it to the verge of destruction, till the mask of the spectre fell, and the ghastly features of death appeared.

This dreadful punishment also was the immediate effect of the atrocities which it chastised. In the absence of all

* " There is in the misfortunes of France, enough," says Savary, " to make her sons shed tears of blood."—SAVARY, iv. 382.

the enjoyments of domestic life, in the destruction of every pacific employment, one only career, that of violence, remained. From necessity, as well as inclination, every man took to arms; the sufferings of the state swelled the ranks on the frontier, and France became a great military power, from the causes which it was thought would have led to its destruction. The natural consequence of this was the establishment of military despotism, and the prosecution of the insane career of conquest by a victorious chieftain. France only awoke from her dream of ambition when her youth was mowed down, her armies destroyed, her conquests rifled, and her glory lost. Both the allied powers and the French people suffered in these disastrous conflicts, because both deserved to suffer: the former for their ambitious projects on the territory of the Republic, and total oblivion of the moral objects of the contest; the latter for their unparalleled internal cruelty, and universal external oppression.

Finally, the history of those melancholy periods affords the strongest evidence of the incessant operation of the principles destined for the preservation and extension of social happiness, even in the darkest periods of human existence. Since the fall of the Roman empire, no such calamitous era had arisen as that which immediately followed the 10th of August; none in which innocence so generally suffered, and vice so long triumphed; in which impiety was so openly professed, and profligacy so generally indulged; in which blood flowed in such ceaseless torrents, and anguish embittered such a multitude of hearts. Yet, even in those disastrous times, the benevolent laws of nature were incessantly acting: this anguish expiated the sins of former times; this blood tamed the fierceness of present discord. In the stern school of adversity wisdom was learned, and error forgotten; speculation ceased to blind its votaries, and ambition to mislead by the language of virtue. Years of suffering conferred centuries of experience; the latest posterity will, it is to be hoped, in that country at least, reap the fruits of the Reign of Terror. Like all human things, the government of France may undergo changes in the lapse of time; different institutions may be required,

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

73.

Manner in which it was brought about.

74.

Incessant operation of the laws of Providence during all the period.

CHAP. and new dynasties called to the throne: but no bloody
XIX. convulsion similar to that which once tore its bosom

1795. will again take place; the higher ranks will not a second
time be massacred by the lower;—ere another French
Revolution of the same character as that which has been
pertrayed can ensue, the age in which it occurs must be
ignorant of the first.

CHAPTER XX.

RISE OF NAPOLEON, AND CAMPAIGN OF 1796 IN ITALY.

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE was born at Ajaccio, in Corsica, on the 5th February 1768.* The Duke of Wellington was born in the same year with that which he subsequently assumed as that of his nativity, in order to constitute himself a French citizen. "Providence," said Louis XVIII., "owed us that counterpoise." His family, though noble, had not been distinguished, and had suffered severely from misfortune. He was too great a man to attempt to derive distinction from any adventitious advantages which did not really belong to him, and could afford to discard all the lustre of patrician descent. When the Emperor of Austria endeavoured, after he became his son-in-law, to trace his connexion with some of the obscure Dukes of Treviso, he answered that he was the Rudolph of Hapsburg of his family; and when the genealogists were engaged in deducing his descent from an ancient line of Gothic princes, he cut short their labours by declaring that his patent of nobility dated from the battle of Montenotte.¹

His mother, like that of many other eminent men of whom history has preserved a record, was distinguished by great beauty, and no common firmness and intrepidity of mind. She shared in the fatigues and dangers of her husband during the civil dissensions which distracted the island at the time of Napoleon's birth, and had recently before been engaged in some expeditions on horseback with him.

CHAP.
XX.

1796.

1.

Parentage
and family
of Napoleon.¹ Las Cas. i.
108, 112, 137.
Bour. i. 18,
23.

2.

His mother,
and Napo-
leon's birth.

* He was born on 5th February 1768, and subsequently gave out that he was born in August 1769, as, in the interim, Corsica had been incorporated with the French monarchy.—ODELEBEN, i. 230, and *Histoire de France*, par M. SALGUES, i. 3, 4.

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XX.

1796.

His father died at the age of thirty-eight, of a cancer in the stomach, a complaint hereditary in his family, which also proved fatal to Napoleon himself; but the want of paternal care was more than supplied by his mother, to whose early education and solicitude he, in after life, mainly ascribed his elevation.* Though left a widow in the prime of life, she had already borne thirteen children, of whom five sons and three daughters survived their father. She lived to see one of them wearing the crown

¹ Las Cas. i. 117, 119, 120.
O'Meara, ii. 100. D'Abr. ii. 376, 377.
Las. Cas. i. 116, 117, 119, 120.
O'Meara, ii. 100.

of Charlemagne, and another seated on the throne of Charles V. On the day of his birth, being the festival of the Assumption, she had been at church, and was seized with her pains during high mass. She was brought home hastily, and, as there was not time to prepare a bed, was laid upon a couch covered with tapestry representing the heroes of the Iliad, and there the future conqueror was brought into the world.¹

3.
His early
character.

In the years of infancy he exhibited nothing remarkable, excepting irritability and turbulence of temper. But these qualities, as well as the decision with which they were accompanied, were so powerfully developed, that they gave him the entire command of his eldest brother Joseph, a boy of a mild and unassuming character, who was constantly beaten, pinched, or tormented by the future ruler of the world. But even at that early period it was observed that he never wept when chastised; and on one occasion, when he was only seven years of age, having been suspected unjustly of a fault, and punished when innocent, he endured the pain, and subsisted in disgrace for three days on the coarsest food, rather than betray his companion, who was really in fault. Though his anger was violent, it was generally of short endurance, and his smile from the first was like a beam of the sun emerging from the clouds. But, nevertheless, he gave no indications of extraordinary capacity at that early age; and his mother was frequently heard to declare, that, of all her children, he was the one whom she would least have expected to have attained any extraordinary eminence.¹ This is often observed of those destined for ultimate greatness; and the reason is, that they are reflecting rather than quick, and that their

² D'Abr. i. 49, 52, 54.
Las Cas. i. 126.

* "My opinion," said Napoleon, "is, that the future good or bad conduct of a child depends entirely on the mother."—O'MEARA, ii. 100.

attention is fixed on things, which render a man eminent, rather than words, which make a schoolboy distinguished.

The winter residence of his father was usually at Ajaccio, the place of his birth, where there is still preserved the model of a cannon, weighing about thirty pounds, the early plaything of Napoleon. But in summer the family retired to a dilapidated villa near the isle Sanguinière, once the residence of a relation of his mother's, situated in a romantic spot on the sea-shore. The house is approached by an avenue, overhung by the cactus and acacia, and other shrubs which grow luxuriantly in a southern climate. It has a garden and a lawn, showing vestiges of neglected beauty, and surrounded by a shrubbery permitted to run to wilderness. There, enclosed by the cactus, the clematis, and the wild olive, is a singular and isolated granite rock, beneath which the remains of a small summer-house are still visible, the entrance to which is nearly closed by a luxuriant fig-tree. This was the favourite retreat of the young Napoleon, who early showed a love of solitary meditation, during the periods when the vacations at school permitted him to return home. We might suppose that there were perhaps formed those visions of ambition and high resolves, for which the limits of the world were ere long felt to be insufficient, did we not know that childhood can hardly anticipate the destiny of maturer years; and that, in Cromwell's words, a man never rises so high as when he does not know where his course is to terminate.¹

At an early age he was sent to the Military School, first of Angers, and latterly of Brienne. It is remarkable that the Duke of Wellington also learned the rudiments of the art of war at the first of these seminaries. His character there underwent a rapid alteration. He became thoughtful, studious, contemplative, and diligent in the extreme. His proficiency, especially in mathematics, was soon remarkable; but the quickness of his temper, though subdued, was not extinguished. On one occasion, having been subjected to a degrading punishment by his master, that of dining on his knees at the gate of the refectory, the mortification he experienced was so excessive, that it produced a violent vomiting and a universal tremor of the nerves.² But in the games of his companions he was

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XX.

1796.

4.

His residence and habits when in Corsica.

¹ Benson's Corsica, 4.
^{6.} Scott, iii. 10.

5.
Removed to the Military School at Brienne; his character there.

² Las. Cas. i. 127. Bour. i. 22.

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XX.

1796.

inferior to none in spirit and agility, and already began to evince, in a decided predilection for military pursuits, the native bias of his mind. During the winter of 1783-4, so remarkable for its severity even in southern latitudes, the ordinary amusements of the boys without doors were completely stopped. Napoleon proposed to his companions to beguile the weary hours by forming intrenchments and bastions of snow, with parapets, ravelins, and hornworks. The little army was divided into two parties, one of which was intrusted with the attack, the other with the defence of the works; and the mimic war was continued for several weeks, during which fractures and wounds were received on both sides. On another occasion, the wife of the porter of the school, well known to the boys for the fruit which she sold, having presented herself at the door of their theatre to be allowed to see the *Death of Cæsar*, which was to be played by the youths, and been refused an entrance, the sergeant at the entrance, induced by the vehemence of her manner, reported the matter to the young Napoleon, who was the officer in command on the occasion. "Remove that woman, who brings here the license of camps," said the future ruler of the Revolution.²

¹ Bour. i.
25, 28.

6.
Pichegru
at the same
school.

It was the fortune of the school at Brienne at this time to possess among its scholars, besides Napoleon, another boy, who rose to the highest eminence in the Revolution, PICHEGRU, afterwards conqueror of Holland. He was several years older than Napoleon, and instructed him in the elements of mathematics, and the four first rules of arithmetic. Pichegru early perceived the firm character of his little pupil; and when, many years afterwards, he had embraced the Royalist party, and it was proposed to him to sound Napoleon, then in the command of the army of Italy, he replied, "Don't waste time upon him: I have known him from his infancy; his character is inflexible; he has taken his side, and will never swerve from it." The fate of these two illustrious men afterwards rose in painful contrast to each other: Pichegru was strangled in a dungeon, when Napoleon was ascending the throne of France.¹

² Las. Cas.
i. 128, 131.
O'Meara,
i. 240.

The speculations of Napoleon at this time were more devoted to political than military subjects. His habits were thoughtful and solitary; and his conversation, even

at that early age, was so remarkable for its reflection and energy, that it attracted the notice of the Abbé Raynal, with whom he frequently lived during vacations, and who discoursed with him on government, legislation, and the relations of commerce. He was distinguished by his Italian complexion, his piercing look, and the decided style of his expression: a peculiarity frequently inducing a vehemence of manner, which rendered him not generally popular with his schoolfellows. The moment their play-time arrived, he flew to the library of the school, where he read with avidity the historical works of the ancients, particularly Polybius, Plutarch, and Arrian. His companions disliked him, on account of his not joining their games at these hours, and frequently rallied him on his name and Corsican birth. He often said to Bourrienne, his earliest friend, with much bitterness—"I hate these French—I will do them all the mischief in my power." Notwithstanding this, his animosity had nothing ungenerous in it; and when he was intrusted, in his turn, with the enforcing of any regulation which was infringed, he preferred going to prison to informing against the young delinquents.¹

Though his progress at school was respectable, it was not remarkable; and the notes transmitted to government in 1784, exhibited many other young men much more distinguished for their early proficiency. But from the very first he gave decided marks of the inflexibility of his temper. In the private instructions communicated to government by the masters of the establishment, he was characterised as of a "domineering, imperious, and headstrong disposition." During the vacations of school, he returned in general to Corsica; where he gave vent to the ardour of his mind, in traversing the mountains and valleys of that romantic island, and listening to the tales of feudal strife and family revenge by which its inhabitants are so remarkably distinguished. The celebrated Paoli, the hero of Corsica, accompanied him in some of these excursions, and explained to him on the road the actions which he had fought, and the positions which he had occupied, during his struggle for the independence of the island.² The energy and decision of his young companion at this period, made a great impression on that illustrious

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1796.

7.

His early subjects of thought.

¹ Bour. i.

27, 32, 33,

35. Las.

Cas. i. 136.

D'Abr. i.

111.

8.

His progress at school.

² Antom. ii.

147. Las

Cas. i. 136,

ii. 348.

Bour. i. 37,

38.

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XX.

1796.

9.

Is sent to
the Ecole
Militaire
at Paris.
Enters the
army

man. "Oh, Napoleon!" said he, "you do not resemble the moderns—you belong to the heroes of Plutarch."

At the age of fourteen, he was sent from the school of Brienne to the Ecole Militaire at Paris, for the completion of his military studies. He had not been long there, when he was so much struck with the luxurious habits in which the young men were then brought up, that he addressed an energetic memorial to the governor on the subject, strongly urging, that instead of having footmen and grooms to wait upon their orders, they should be taught to do every thing for themselves, and be inured to the hardships and privations which awaited them in real warfare. In the year 1785, at the age of sixteen, he received a commission in a regiment of artillery, and was soon promoted to the rank of first lieutenant, in a corps quartered at Valence. Shortly after, he gave a proof of the varied subjects which occupied his mind, by writing a history of Corsica, and an Essay for a prize, proposed by the Abbé Raynal, on the "Institutions most likely to contribute to Public Happiness." The premium was adjudged to the young soldier. These productions, as might have been expected, were distinguished by the revolutionary doctrines then generally prevalent, and were very different from his maturer speculations. The essay was recovered by Talleyrand after Napoleon was on the throne; but the moment the Emperor saw it he threw it into the flames.¹

¹ O'Meara, ii. 168, 169.
Las Cas. i. 43, 136, 141.
Bour. i. 44.
D'Abr. i. 76.

10.

Progress
and develop-
ment of his
character
there.

At this period, Napoleon was generally disliked by his companions: he was considered as proud, haughty, and irascible; but with the few whose conversation he valued, and whose friendship he chose to cultivate, he was already a favourite, and high expectations began to be formed of the future eminence to which he might rise. His powers of reasoning were especially remarkable; his expressions lucid and energetic; his knowledge and information immense, considering his years and the opportunities of study which he had enjoyed. Logical accuracy was the great characteristic of his mind; and his subsequent compositions have abundantly proved, that if he had not become the first conqueror, he would have been one of the greatest writers, as he assuredly was one of the most profound thinkers, of modern times.²

² D'Abr. i. 111. Las Cas. i. 140, 141.

His figure, always diminutive, was at that period thin

and meagre in the highest degree ; a circumstance which rendered his appearance somewhat ridiculous when he first assumed the military dress. Mademoiselle Permon, afterwards Duchess of Abrantes, one of his earliest female acquaintances, and who afterwards became one of the most brilliant wives of the Imperial court, mentions that he came to their house on the day on which he first put on his uniform, in the highest spirits, as is usual with young men on such an occasion : but her sister, two years younger than herself, who had just left her boarding-school, was so struck with his comical appearance, in the enormous boots which were at that period worn by the artillery, which he had entered, that she immediately burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, saying he resembled nothing so much as Puss in Boots. The stroke told ; the libel was too true not to be felt : but Napoleon soon recovered his good humour, and, a few days afterwards, presented her with an elegantly bound copy of Puss in Boots, as a proof that he retained no rancour on account of her raillery.¹

When the Revolution broke out, he adhered, like almost all the young officers of subaltern rank, to the popular side, and continued a warm patriot during the whole time of the Constituent Assembly. But, on the appointment of the Legislative Assembly, he has himself declared that his sentiments underwent a rapid change ; and he soon imbibed, under the Reign of Terror, that profound hatred of the Jacobins which his subsequent life so strongly evinced ; and which he never, even for the purposes of ambition, made any attempt to disguise. It was his fortune to witness both the mob which inundated the Tuileries on the 20th June, and that which overturned the throne on the 10th August ; and on both he strongly expressed his sense of the ruinous consequences likely to arise from the want of resolution in the government. No man knew better the consequences of yielding to popular clamour, or how rapidly it is checked by proper firmness in the depositaries of power. From the weakness shown on the 20th June, he predicted the disastrous effects which so speedily followed on the next great revolt of the populace. When he saw the monarch, in obedience to the rabble, put on the red cap, his indignation knew no bounds. "How on earth," he exclaimed,² "could they let those

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1796.

11.

His personal
appearance
at that time.

1 D'Abr. i.
113.

12.

He espouses
with his
regiment
the cause of
the Revolution.

² Bour. i 49.
Lus Cas. i.
146.

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1796.

13.
His first
service in
Corsica, and
at the siege
of Toulon.

wretches enter the palace! They should have cut down four or five hundred with grape-shot, and the rest would speedily have taken to flight."

The first military exploit of Napoleon was in his native country. The disturbances in Corsica having led the revolutionary forces into that island, he was dispatched from Bastia, in spring 1793, to surprise his native city of Ajaccio, and succeeded in making himself master of a tower called the *Torre di Capitello*, in its vicinity, where he was shortly afterwards besieged, and compelled to evacuate it. Thus, like Frederick of Prussia, and Wellington, his first essay in arms proved unfortunate. His talents and the high character which he had received from the masters of the military academy, ere long, however, led to a more important employment. At the siege of Toulon, the command of the artillery, after the operations had advanced a considerable length, was intrusted to his direction, and he soon communicated a new impulse to the hitherto languishing progress of the siege. By his advice, the attack was changed from the body of the place to the forts on the *Hauteur de Grasse*, and on the Mountain of Faron, which proved so successful, that the siege, which before his arrival was on the point of being abandoned in despair, was speedily crowned with complete success. During this operation he was first struck by the firmness and intrepidity of a young corporal of artillery, whom he immediately recommended for promotion. Having occasion to send a dispatch from the trenches, he called for some person who could write, that he might dictate the order. A young soldier stepped from the ranks, and resting the paper on the breastwork, began to write as he dictated, when a shot from the enemy's batteries struck the ground close to him, and covered the paper with earth. "Thank you," said the soldier; "we shall have no occasion for sand on this page." Napoleon asked him what he could do for him. "Every thing," replied the young private, blushing with emotion, and touching his left shoulder with his hand; "you can turn this worsted into an epaulet." A few days after, Napoleon sent for the same soldier to order him to reconnoitre in the enemy's trenches, and recommended that he should disguise himself, for fear of his being discovered. "Never," replied he. "Do you

take me for a spy? I will go in my uniform, though I should never return." And in effect he set out instantly, dressed as he was, and had the good fortune to come back unhurt. Napoleon immediately recommended him for promotion, and never lost sight of his courageous secretary. He was JUNOT, afterwards Marshal of France, and Duke of Abrantes. So strongly did Napoleon's character impress Junot at that time, that he quitted his regiment to devote himself to his fortunes as aide-de-camp, and wrote to his father in 1794, in answer to his inquiries, what sort of young man he was to whom he had attached himself,—
 "He is one of those men of whom Nature is sparing, and whom she does not throw upon the earth but with centuries between them."¹

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XX.
1796.

On another occasion, an artilleryman having been shot while loading a gun, he took up the dead man's ramrod, and with his own hands served the piece for a considerable time. He first took notice, at the same siege, of another young soldier named DUROC, whom he never afterwards lost sight of, made Marshal of the Palace, and ever treated with the most unlimited confidence, till he was killed by his side the day after the battle of Bantzen. Duroc loved Napoleon for himself, and possessed, perhaps, a larger share of his confidence than any of his other generals; and none knew so well, in after years, how to let the first ebullitions of the Imperial wrath escape without producing fatal effects, and allowing the better judgment of his sovereign to resume its sway in cooler moments. The reputation which Napoleon acquired from the successful issue of this siege was very great. All the generals, representatives, and soldiers, who had heard the advice which he gave at the councils, three months before the capture of the town, and witnessed his activity at the works, anticipated a future career of glory to the young officer. Dugommier wrote to the Committee of Public Salvation in these words:—"Reward and promote that young man; for if you are ungrateful towards him, he will raise himself alone."²

¹ Scott, iii.
21. Duchess
D'Abr. ii.
191. Las
Cas. i. 166.
Nap. i. 10,
13.

14.
First ac-
quaintance
with Junot
and Duroc.

² Las. Cas. i.
163, and ii.
156, 157.
D'Abr. ii.
193. Scott,
iii. 35.

This success procured for Napoleon the command of the artillery of the army of Italy during the campaign of 1794. Dumorbion, who was advanced in years, submitted all the operations to a council of younger officers, among

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1796.

15.

Is attached
to Dumor-
bion's army
in the Mari-
time Alps.

¹ Nap. iii.
15, 26, 34.

16.

Sent to
Genoa, and
refuses the
command of
the National
Guard of
Paris.

whom Napoleon and Massena soon acquired a decided lead; and the former, from the force of superior talents, gradually came to direct the whole operations of the campaign. It was his ability which procured for the French armies the capture of Saorgio, the Col di Tende, and all the higher chain of the Maritime Alps. These successes awakened in his ardent mind those lofty visions of ambition which he was so soon destined to realise. One night in June 1794, he spent on the summit of the Col di Tende, from whence at sunrise he beheld with delight the blue plains of Italy, already to his prophetic eye the theatre of glorious achievement.¹

In July 1794, Napoleon was sent by the Commissioners of the Convention to Genoa upon a secret mission, in which he was connected with Robespierre's brother, then intrusted with the supreme command at Toulon. This mission saved his life; the younger Robespierre, for whom, at that period, he had conceived the highest admiration, earnestly entreated Napoleon, instead of going, to accompany him to Paris, whither he was returning to support his brother; but he was inflexible in his refusal. Had he yielded, he would infallibly have shared the fate of both; and the destinies of Europe might have been changed. The situation he was offered was that of Henriot, commander of the National Guard, of whose capacity the Committee of Public Salvation had become somewhat doubtful. It was brilliant enough, however, in those days to awaken the ambition of his brothers Joseph and Lucien, who urged him to close with the offer. "No," said Napoleon, "I will not accept it: this is not a time to play the enthusiast; it is no easy matter to save your head at Paris. Robespierre the younger is an honourable man, but his brother is no trifle; if I went to Paris, I should be obliged to serve him. Me serve such a man! Never. I am not ignorant of the service I might be of in replacing that imbecile commander of the National Guard of Paris, but I do not choose to do so; this is not the time for engaging in such an undertaking. What could I do in that huge galley? At present there is no honourable place for one but the army; but have patience, *the time is coming when I shall rule Paris.*"²

² Lucien
Bonaparte,
Mém. i. 56,
57.

As it was, Napoleon was exposed, from his connexion

with these leaders, to no inconsiderable dangers even on his Italian mission. Within a month after, he was, in consequence of the fall of Robespierre, arrested by the new commissioners, whom the Thermidorian party sent out to the army of Italy, and made a narrow escape with his life. He addressed, in consequence, an energetic remonstrance to the commissioners, remarkable for the strong sense, condensed thought, and powerful expression which it contains; while his friend Junot was so penetrated with grief at his misfortune, that he wrote to them, protesting his innocence, and imploring to be allowed to share his captivity. The generous application was attended with complete success; a fortnight afterwards, he was provisionally set at liberty, and immediately returned to Paris. He was there offered a command in La Vendée; and, having declined it, he was deprived of his rank as a general officer, and reduced to private life.¹

The period which now intervened from the dismissal of Napoleon to the attack of the Sections on the Convention, in October 1795, he has himself described as the happiest in his life. Living almost without money, on the bounty of his friends, in coffee-houses and theatres, his ardent imagination dwelt incessantly on the future; and visions floated across his mind, tinged with those bright colours in which the eye of youthful genius arrays the path of life—a striking proof of the dependence of happiness on the mind itself, and the slight influence which even the greatest external success has in replenishing the secret fountains from which the joys or sorrows of existence are drawn. During these days of visionary romance, he dwelt with peculiar pleasure on his favourite idea of repairing to Constantinople and offering his services to the Grand Signior, under the impression that things were too stable in the Western World, and that it was in the East alone that those great revolutions were to be effected which at once immortalise the names of their authors. He even went so far as to prepare, and address to the French government, a memorial, in which he offered, with a few officers who were willing to follow his fortunes, to go to Turkey, to organise its forces against Russia; a proposal which, if acceded to, would probably have changed the fate of the world. This impression never forsook him through life; it was, even more than the destruction of

CHAP.
XX.

1796.

17.

He is arrested and liberated, and returns to Paris.
6th Aug.
1794.

20th Aug.
15th Sept.

1 Bour. i. 60,
61, 69, 70.
Las Cas. 167.
D'Abr. ii.
194. Nap.
iii. 15, 26,
34.

18.
His subsequent life in Paris.

CHAP. British commerce, the secret motive of the expedition to
 XX. Moscow; even after all the glories of his subsequent
 1796. career, he looked back with regret to these early visions,
 and, when speaking of Sir Sidney Smith and the check at
 Acre, repeatedly said—"That man made me miss my
 destiny."¹

¹ O'Meara, ii.
 155. Las
 Cas. i. 172.
 Bour. i. 72,
 76.

19.
 His desti-
 tute condi-
 tion there.

So low, however, were the fortunes of the future emperor fallen at that period, that he was frequently indebted to his friends for a meal, which he could not afford to purchase himself. At one time, his fortune being reduced to *five francs*, he went out to the quays of Paris, intending to throw himself into the river; from which he was only diverted by the generosity of a friend, who in the midst of his anguish presented him with a large sum of money.* His brother Lucien and he brought the black bread received in their rations to Madame Bourrienne, and received in exchange loaves of white flour, which she had clandestinely, and at the hazard of her life, received during the law of the *Maximum* from a neighbouring confectioner. At this period she lodged in a new house in the Rue des Marais. Napoleon was very anxious to hire, with the assistance of his uncle, afterwards Cardinal Fesch, the one opposite. "With that house," said he, "the society of yourself, a few friends, and a cabriolet, I should be the happiest of men."² In those days Napoleon wore the grey great-coat, which has since become more celebrated than the white plume of Henry IV.; he had no gloves, for, as he said himself, they were a useless expense; his boots, ill made, were seldom blackened; his yellow visage, meagre countenance, and severe physiognomy, gave as little indication of his future appearance as his fortunes did of his future destiny. Salicetti had been the author of his arrest. "He did me all the mischief in his power," said Napoleon, "but *my star* would not permit him to prevail;"³ so early had the idea of a brilliant destiny taken possession of his mind. He afterwards made a generous return to his enemy: Salicetti was ordered to be arrested by the Convention after the condemnation of Romme,⁴ the chief of the conspirators, and he was concealed in the house of the mother of the future

² Bour. i.
 76, 81, 86.

³ D'Abr. i.
 255, 256.

⁴ Bour. i.
 76, 81, 86.
 D'Abr. i.
 255, 256.

* Demasis was this generous friend: he gave him 30,000 francs in gold, with which he relieved the distresses of his family.—See MONTAULON, *Captivité de St Hélène*, ii. 33, 34.

Duchess of Abrantes. Napoleon learned the secret in consequence of a love intrigue between his valet and their maid; but he concealed his knowledge, facilitated their escape, and sent a letter to his enemy on the road, informing him of the return he had made for his malevolence.

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XX.

1795.

But another destiny awaited the young soldier. The approaching conflict of the Convention with the Sections, was the first circumstance which raised him from the obscurity into which he had recently fallen. His great abilities being known to several persons of influence in the government, especially Carnot; he was, on the first appearance of the approaching struggle, taken into the confidence of administration, and had been consulted by them for some months before the contest began. When the attack by Menou on the Section Lepelletier failed, Napoleon was sent for. He found the Convention in the utmost agitation; and measures of accommodation with the insurgents were already talked of, when his firmness and decision saved the government. He painted in such vivid colours the extreme peril of sharing the supreme authority between the military commander and three commissioners of the Convention, that the Committee of Public Salvation agreed to appoint Barras commander-in-chief, and Napoleon second in command. No sooner was this done than he dispatched at midnight a chief of squadron, named Murat, with three hundred horse, to seize the park of artillery lying at Sablons. He arrived a few minutes before the troops of the Sections, who came to obtain them for the insurgents; and, by this decisive step, put at the disposal of government those formidable batteries, which next day spread death through the ranks of the national guard, and at one blow extinguished the revolt. Barras declared in his report, that it was to Napoleon's skilful disposition of the posts round the Tuileries that the success of the day was owing; but he himself never ceased to lament, that his first success in separate command should have been gained in civil dissension; and often said, in after times, that he would give many years of his life to tear that page from his history.²

20.
Receives the
command
from the
Directory;
on the 13th
Vendém.
aire.

² Bour. i. 90,
96. Nap. iii.
67, 74.

Though not gifted with the powers of popular oratory, Napoleon was not destitute of that ready talent which

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XX.

1796.

21.

His ready
popular wit.

catches the idea most likely to divert the populace, and frequently disarms them even in the moment of their greatest irritation. When in command in Paris, after the suppression of the revolt, he was frequently brought into collision with the people in a state of the utmost excitement; and on these occasions his presence of mind was as conspicuous as his humanity was admirable. Above a hundred families, during the dreadful famine which followed the suppression of the revolt of the Sections in the winter 1795-6, were saved from death by his beneficence. On one occasion, he was trying to appease a mob in a state of extreme irritation, when a fat woman, bursting from the throng, exclaimed, "These wearers of epaulets, provided they fill their own skins, care not though the poor die of famine."—"My good woman," said Napoleon, who at that time was exceedingly thin, "look at me, and say which of us has fed the best." This at once turned the laugh on his side, and he continued his route without interruption.¹

¹ Las Cas.
ii. 173
D'Abr. ii.
28.

22.
Early his-
tory of
Murat.

JOACHIM MURAT, who was, by a singular coincidence, thus associated with Napoleon in his first important command, was born on 25th March 1771, at La Bastede, near Cahors, in Languedoc, where his father was an innkeeper. His bold and turbulent disposition early gave him a distaste for letters: he was soon taken from school, where he was making no progress; and the future King of Naples began life as an assistant to the waiter in his father's hotel. He afterwards enlisted in the Chasseurs of Ardennes; but having got into a scrape, he deserted his regiment, and repaired to Paris, where he got employment again as a waiter, at a humble restaurateur's. There, his activity, address, and elegant figure, having attracted notice, he was offered a situation, in 1792, in the Constitutional Guard of Louis XVI. On its being disbanded, he was appointed sub-lieutenant in the Eleventh Regiment of Chasseurs-à-cheval of the line, and soon made himself remarkable by the daring of his character, and the ultra-revolutionary sentiments which he uttered; qualities which, in those days of democratic turmoil, procured for him rapid advancement. He was already lieutenant-colonel, in command of his regiment at Abbeville, when, on the assassination of Marat, in 1793, by Charlotte Corday, he wrote to the Jacobin Club, that he intended, from admira-

tion for the illustrious deceased, to change his name to *Murat*. His extreme principles were so well known, that after the 9th Thermidor, during the reaction against the Reign of Terror, he was deprived of his command, and came to Paris, where, like Napoleon, he lived an idle life, dreaming away the time in great poverty, in coffee-houses, till the revolt of the Sections, when he volunteered his services to the government, and powerfully contributed, by the sudden seizure of the artillery at Sablons, to the decisive success which they obtained.

The sketch of this celebrated man given by the master-hand of Napoleon, will serve at once to furnish a key to his actions, and prepare the reader to follow his achievements with interest. "*Murat*," said he, "was a most singular character. He loved, I may rather say, adored me: with me he was my right arm; without me he was nothing. Order Murat to attack and destroy four or five thousand men in such a direction, it was done in a moment; leave him to himself, he was an *imbecile* without judgment. In battle he was perhaps the bravest man in the world: his boiling courage carried him into the midst of the enemy, covered with plumes and glittering with gold; how he escaped was a miracle, for, from being so distinguished a mark, every one fired at him. The Cossacks admired him on account of his excessive bravery. Every day Murat was engaged in single combat with some of them, and returned with his sabre dripping with the blood of those he had slain. He was a Paladin in the field; but in the cabinet destitute of either decision or judgment."¹

The next event in Napoleon's career was not less important on his ultimate fortunes. On occasion of the general disarming of the inhabitants, after the overthrow of the Sections, a boy of ten years of age came to request from Napoleon, who was appointed General of the Interior after this success, that his father's sword, which had been delivered up, should be restored to him. His name was EUGENE BEAUHARNAIS; and Napoleon was so much struck by his appearance, and the earnestness with which he enforced his request, that he was induced not only to comply with the request, but to visit his mother, the Countess Josephine Beauharnais. Her husband, Count

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XX.

1796.

23.
Outline of
his character.

¹ O'Meara,
ii. 96.

24.
Napoleon's
marriage
with Josephine.

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1796.

Alexander Beauharnais, had been one of the most elegant dancers of his day, and from that accomplishment was frequently honoured with the hand of Marie Antoinette at the court balls at Versailles. Napoleon, whose inclination already began to revert to the manners of the old *régime*, used to look around, during his evening visits to the Countess, his widow, if the windows were closed, and say, "Now let us talk of the old court; let us make a tour to Versailles." From thence arose the intimacy which led to his marriage with that lady, and ultimately placed her on the throne of France.¹

¹ Las Cas. i. 173; ii. 190, 191. D'Abr. iii. 314. Nap. i. 72. Scott, iii. 80.

25.
Her history, and remarkable adventure at the fall of Robespierre.

² Mém. de Josephine, par Mád. Crevier, i. 251, 252, 253. Scott, iii. 82. Las Cas. i. 173, and ii. 190, 191. D'Abr. iii. 314. Nap. i. 72.

Her history had been very remarkable. She was born in the West Indies; and it had early been prophesied, by an old negress, that she should lose her first husband, be extremely unfortunate, but that she should afterwards be greater than a queen.* This prophecy, the authenticity of which is placed beyond a doubt, was fulfilled in the most singular manner. Her first husband, Count Alexander Beauharnais, a general in the army on the Rhine, had been guillotined during the Reign of Terror, solely on account of his belonging to the nobility; and she herself, who was also imprisoned at the same time, was only saved from impending death by the fall of Robespierre. So strongly was the prophecy impressed on her mind, that, while lying in the dungeons of the Conciergerie, expecting every hour to be summoned to the Revolutionary Tribunal, she mentioned it to her fellow-prisoners, and, to amuse them, named some of them as ladies of the bedchamber; a jest which she afterwards lived to realise to one of their number.†²

* The author heard this prophecy in 1801, long before Napoleon's elevation to the throne, from the late Countess of Bath, and the late Countess of Ancrum, who were educated in the same convent with Josephine, and had repeatedly heard her mention the circumstance in early youth.

† Josephine herself narrated this extraordinary passage in her life in the following terms:—

"One morning the jailer entered the chamber where I slept with the Duchesse d'Aiguillon and two other ladies, and told me he was going to take my mattress to give it to another prisoner. 'Why,' said Madame d'Aiguillon eagerly, 'will not Madame de Beauharnais obtain a better one?'—'No, no,' replied he, with a fiendish smile, 'she will have no need of one; for she is about to be led to the Conciergerie, and thence to the guillotine.'

"At these words my companions in misfortune uttered piercing shrieks. I consoled them as well as I could; and at length, worn out with their eternal lamentations. I told them that their grief was utterly unreasonable; that not only I should not die, but live to be Queen of France. 'Why, then,

Josephine possessed all the qualities fitted to excite admiration. Graceful in her manners, affectionate in her disposition, easy in temper, elegant in appearance, she was qualified both to awaken the love, and form the happiness, of the young general, whose fate was now united with her own. She was never possessed of regular beauty, and, when united to Napoleon, was past her first youth, being twenty-eight years of age. But she was grace personified; her taste in dress was exquisite, and no one made so much of the physical advantages which yet remained to her. Her influence in subsequent times, when placed on the throne, was never exerted but for the purposes of humanity; her failings, for she had some, redeemed by the readiness with which she gave ear to the tale of suffering. Napoleon himself said, after he had tasted of all the greatness of the world, that the chief happiness he had known in life had flowed from her affection.* These good and amiable qualities were not without a mixture of feminine passions and weakness. She was passionately fond of dress: a failing which, when her husband rose to greatness, led her into excessive extravagance; and her care-

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XX.

1796.

26.

Her character.

do you not name your maids of honour?' said Madame d'Aiguillon, irritated at such expressions at such a moment. 'Very true,' said I; 'I did not think of that:—well, my dear, I make you one of them.' Upon this the tears of these ladies fell apace, for they never doubted I was mad. But the truth was, I was not gifted with any extraordinary courage, but internally persuaded of the truth of the oracle.

"Madame d'Aiguillon soon after became unwell, and I drew her towards the window, which I opened, to admit through the bars a little fresh air;—I there perceived a poor woman who knew us, and who was making a number of signs, which I at first could not understand. She constantly held up her gown (*robe*;) and seeing that she had some object in view, I called out '*robe*,' to which she answered 'yes.' She then lifted up a stone and put it in her lap, which she lifted up a second time; I called out ' *pierre*,' upon which she evinced the greatest joy at perceiving that her signs were understood. Joining, then, the stone to her robe, she eagerly imitated the motion of cutting off the head, and immediately began to dance, and evince the most extravagant joy. This singular pantomime awakened in our minds a vague hope that possibly Robespierre might be no more.

"At this moment, when we were vacillating between hope and fear, we heard a great noise in the corridor, and the terrible voice of our jailer, who said to his dog, giving him, at the same time, a kick, 'Get on, you cursed Robespierre.' That coarse phrase at once taught us that we had nothing to fear, and that France was saved."—*Mem. de Josephine*, i. 252, 253.

* "Josephine," said Napoleon, "was grace personified. Every thing she did was with a grace and delicacy peculiar to herself. I never saw her act inelegantly the whole time we lived together. Her toilet was a perfect arsenal; and she effectually defended herself against the assaults of time."—O'MEARA, ii. 101. Being some years older than her husband, she took this method, like many others of her sex, of concealing the advances of time,—"*Annos celans elegantia*."

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XX.

1796.

¹ Bour. i.
101; viii.
372. Scott,
iii. 83. Hist.
du Direct.
i. 191.

lessness and ease of temper during her widowhood, had led her frequently into doubtful society during the profligacy which followed the Reign of Terror. After her marriage with Napoleon had fixed her destinies in an exalted station, she still retained the levity of manner and spirit of coquetry which she had then acquired, and sometimes, though without any real foundation, excited furious fits of jealousy in his breast.¹

27.
Marries her,
and receives
the com-
mand of the
army of
Italy.

In the first instance, however, motives of ambition combined with a softer feeling to fix Napoleon's choice: Madame Beauharnais had formed an intimacy in prison with Madame de Fontenai, the eloquent and beautiful mistress of Tallien, who afterwards became his wife: and the former was, during those days of universal dissolution of manners, a great favourite of Barras, at that period the leading character of the Directory. With his usual volatility, however, he was not sorry of an opportunity of establishing her in marriage with the young general, after the first novelty of the intimacy was over.² His influence, after the fall of Robespierre, promised to be of essential importance to the rising officer. Napoleon married her on the 9th March 1796; he himself being in the twenty-sixth, and she in the twenty-eighth year of her age. At the same time, he laid before the Directory a plan for the Italian campaign, so remarkable for its originality and genius, as to attract the special notice of the illustrious Carnot, then minister at war. The united influence of these two directors, and the magnitude of the obligation which Napoleon had conferred upon them by his decisive victory over the Sections, prevailed. With Josephine he received the command of the Italian armies; and, twelve days after, set out for the Alps, taking with him two thousand louis-d'or for the service of the campaign, the whole specie which the treasury could furnish. The instructions of the Directory were, to do all in his power to revolutionise Piedmont, and so intimidate the other Italian powers; to violate the neutrality of Genoa; seize the forts of Savona; compel the Senate to furnish him with pecuniary supplies, and surrender the keys of Gavi, a fortress perched on a rocky height, commanding the pass of the Bocchetta. In case of refusal, he was directed to carry it by assault.³ His powers were limited to mili-

² Hard. iii.
301.

³ Hard. iii.
302, 303.
Las Cas. i.
173. Bour.
i. 103.
Scott, iii. 83,
84. Hist.
du Direct.
i. 227.

tary operations, and the Directory reserved to themselves the exclusive power of concluding treaties of peace or truce ; a limitation which was speedily disregarded by the enterprising genius of the young conqueror.

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XX.

1796.

ITALY,

- "il bel paese

Che l'Appenin parte, et il mar circonda, et l'Alpe,"

is divided by nature into three great districts, essentially different from each other, and yet distinguished by indelible features from every other country in Europe. The first contains the noble plain, watered by the Po, which stretches from the southern foot of the Alps to the northern declivity of the Appenines, and extends from Coni on the west to the Adriatic on the east. This noble plain, which is three hundred miles in length by a hundred and twenty in breadth, is, beyond all question, the richest and most fertile in Europe. On the west it is sheltered by a vast semicircle of mountains, which there unite the Alps and Appenines, and are surmounted by glittering piles of ice and snow, forming the majestic barrier between France and Italy. In those inexhaustible reservoirs, which the heat of summer converts into perennial fountains of living water, the Po takes its rise, and that classic stream, rapidly fed by the confluence of the torrents which descend through every cleft and valley in the vast circumference, is already a great river when it sweeps under the ramparts of Turin. This immense surface, formerly submerged over its whole extent by water, is a perfect level ; you may travel two hundred miles in a straight line in it without coming to a natural eminence ten feet high. Towards its western end, the soil, chiefly composed of the debris brought down from the adjacent mountains, is for the most part sandy or gravelly ; but it becomes richer as you advance with the course of the Po to the eastward, and the plain from Lodi to Ferrara is composed of the finest alluvial soil, generally thirty-five or forty feet in thickness. This magnificent expanse, the garden of Europe, is watered by numerous rivers, the Ticino, the Adda, the Adige, the Tagliamento, and the Piave, which, descending from the snowy summits of the Alps, fall perpendicularly into the line of the Po,¹ while the Taro and other lesser streams,

28.
Physical description of Italy; the plain of Lombardy.

¹ Personal observation. Chateauvieux, Agriculture d'Italie, 12. Young's Travels, ii. 67, 75.

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XX.

1796.

29.
Physical
qualities of
the first
region.

flowing on the southern side into the same river, from the lower ridges of the Appenines, afford equally to all parts of the plain the means of extensive irrigation, the only requisite in that favoured region for the production of the richest pastures and most luxuriant harvests.

It is hard to say whether the cultivation of the soil, the riches of nature, or the structures of human industry in this beautiful region, are most to be admired. An unrivalled system of agriculture, from which every nation in Europe might take a lesson, has been long established over its whole surface, and two, sometimes three, successive crops annually reward the labours of the husbandman. Indian corn is produced in abundance, and by its return, quadruple that of wheat, affords subsistence for a numerous and dense population. Rice arrives at maturity to a great extent in the marshy districts; and an incomparable system of irrigation, diffused over the whole, conveys the waters of the Alps into an endless series of little canals, like the veins and arteries in the human body, to every field, and in some places to every ridge, in the grass lands. It is in these rich meadows, stretching round Lodi, and from thence to Verona, that the celebrated Parmesan cheese, known over all Europe for the richness of its flavour, is made. The vine and the olive thrive in the sunnyslopes which ascend from this plain to the ridges of the Alps; and a woody zone of never failing beauty lies between the desolation of the mountain and the fertility of the plain. But the climate is severe in winter, and the orange and citron are chilled by the blasts which descend from the frozen glaciers. The cities of this district, both in ancient and modern times, have been worthy, alike in grandeur and opulence, of the luxuriant plain by which they are surrounded. Mantua boasts of the residence of Virgil, Padua of having been the birthplace of Livy, Arqua of the tomb of Petrarch. Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, Canova, have adorned these cities by their works, or immortalised them by their birth; and the stately edifices of Turin, Milan, Bologna, Parma, Verona, and Venice, still attract the learned and ardent from every part of Europe, though their political independence has been extinguished, and their literary celebrity consists rather in the recollection of past than the greatness of present genius.¹

¹ Malte-
Brun, vii.
204, 207.
Personal
observation.

The second region, totally different in character from the former, extends over all the ramifications and declivities of the Appenines, that vast range, which, branching off from the Alps in the neighbourhood of Genoa, runs down the whole centre of Italy to the south of the plain of Lombardy, from the frontiers of Provence to the extremity of Calabria. This great chain, in its central and highest parts, rises to the height of more than 7000 feet above the sea; but in general the elevation is less considerable, and seldom reaches in the centre of the ridge above six thousand feet. It is not one simple central ridge of mountains, having a broad belt of level country on either side between it and the sea; nor is it a chain rising abruptly, like the Andes in South America, from the ocean on one side, so as to leave space for an ample extent of plain, in which the rivers, descending from its summits, may become great and navigable. It is, like all the other chains which branch off from the great stony girdle of the earth, a huge backbone, thickly set with spines of unequal length, some running parallel to each other, others twisted and interlaced in the strangest imaginable manner. As if to complete the disorder in those spots where the spines of the Appenines, being contorted, run parallel to their own central chain, and thus leave a level plain between their base and the sea, volcanic agency has broken in and filled up the space thus left with clusters of hills or lofty mountains of its own formation, as is the case with the Alban Mount near Rome, and Vesuvius in the neighbourhood of Naples. Generally speaking, then, Italy to the south of the plain of Lombardy, is composed of an infinite variety of valleys pent in between high and steep hills, each forming a country to itself, and separated by rugged natural barriers from the others.¹

If the climate of the country were more rigorous, this rugged and woody region, spreading, as it does, over three-fourths of its whole extent, would for the most part be composed, like the Doverfelt of Norway, or the Grampians of Scotland, of cold and cheerless hills, tenanted only by the roe and the heath-fowl. But, under the blue heavens and delightful sun of Italy, the case is very different. Vegetable productions, capable of yielding ample food for man, and in far greater variety than in the plain, are reared

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XX.

1796.

30.

Character of
the second
region.

¹ Arnold's
Lectures on
History, 165.
Personal
observation.

31.

Productions
of nature in
the moun-
tain region.

CHAP.
XX.

1796.

JSismondi,
Agric. de
Toscan, 84,
89. Cha-
teauvieux,
290, 294.

32.
The terrace
cultivation
on the moun-
tains.

with ease in every part of the varied ascent, from the base to the summit of the mountains. The olive, the vine, the fig-tree, the pomegranate, the sweet chestnut, the peach and nectarine, with all the fruits of northern climates, flourish in the utmost luxuriance on the sunny slopes of Tuscany, and in the Roman States; while in Naples and Calabria, in addition to these, are to be found the orange-tree, the citron, the palm, the prickly pear, the prickly cactus, the palm-tree, and the fruits and flowers of tropical regions. An admirable terrace-cultivation, where art and industry have combined to overcome the obstacles of nature, has every where converted the slopes, naturally sterile and arid, into a succession of gardens, loaded with the choicest vegetable productions. A delicious climate there brings the finest fruits to maturity; the grapes hang in festoons from tree to tree; the song of the nightingale is heard in every grove; all nature seems to rejoice in the paradise which the industry of man has created.* To this incomparable system of horticulture, which appears to have been unknown to the ancient Romans, and to have been introduced into Europe by the warriors who returned from the Crusades, the riches and smiling aspect of Tuscany, and the mountain region of Italy, are chiefly to be ascribed; for nothing can be more desolate by nature than the waterless declivities, in general almost destitute of soil, on which it has been formed.¹

The earth required to be brought in from a distance, retaining walls erected, the steep slopes converted into a series of gentle inclinations, the mountain torrents diverted or restrained, and the means of artificial irrigation, to sustain nature during the long droughts of summer, obtained. By the incessant labour of centuries this prodigy has been completed, and the very stony sterility of nature converted into the means of heightening, by artificial means, the heat of summer. The quantity of rock with which the soil abounded, furnished at hand the materials of walls and terraces. Those terraces are always covered

- "Omnia tunc florent: tunc est nova temporis ætas:
Et nova de gravido palmite gemma tumet:
Et modo formatis amicitur vitibus arbos:
Prodit et in summum seminis herba solum:
Et tepidum volucres concentibus aëra mulcent,
Ludit et in pratis luxuriatque pecus."—OVID.

with fruit-trees placed in the reflected rays of the sun. Amidst the reflection of so many walls the fruit is most abundant, and superior of its kind. No room is lost in these little but precious freeholds; the vine extends its tendrils along the terrace-walls; a hedge, formed of the same vine-branches, surrounds each terrace, and covers it with verdure. In the corners formed by the meeting of the supporting-walls, a little sheltered nook is found, where fig-trees are planted, which ripen delicious fruit under their protection. The owner takes advantage of every vacant space to raise melons and vegetables. Olives shelter it from the rains; so that, within the compass of a very small garden, he obtains olives, figs, grapes, pomegranates, and melons. Such is the return which Nature yields under this admirable system of management, that half the crop of seven acres is sufficient in general for the maintenance of a family of five persons, being little more than the produce of three-fourths of an acre to each soul; and the whole produce supports them all in rustic affluence. Italy, in this delightful region, still realises the glowing description of her classic historian above three hundred years ago.*

Great part of the mountain region of Italy has adopted this admirable cultivation; and this explains what, to a northern traveller, at first sight seems inexplicable,—the vast population, which is found not merely in the valleys, but over the greater part of the ridges of the Appenines, and the endless succession of villages and hamlets which are perched on the edge or summits of rocks, often, to appearance, scarcely accessible to human approach. Great care, however, and the constant labour of the husbandman, are required to uphold the little freeholds thus formed out of natural sterility, for, if his attention is intermitted for any considerable time, the violence of the rain destroys what it had cost so much labour to produce. Storms and torrents wash down the soil; the terraces are broken through; the heavy rains bring down a shapeless mass of

CHAP.
XX.

1706.

¹ Chateau-vieux, 299, 303. Personal observation. Sismondi, Agric. de Tosc. 89, 94. Young, ii. 152, 157.

33.
Constant effort requisite to prevent the terraces going to ruin.

* "Ridotta tutta in somma pace, e tranquillata collevata non meno ne luoghi peu montuosi, e peu sterili, che nelle pianure e regioni peu fertili, ne sotto posta ad altro imperio che de suoi medesimi, non solo ora abbondata d'abitati e di ricchezza, ma illustrata somma mente dalla magnificenza di molti principi, dallo splendore di molte nobilissime e bellissime citte, dalla sedia e maestà dalla religione."—GUICCIARDINI, Lib. i.

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XX.

1796.

¹ Chateau-
vieux, 302,
303. Sism.
Agric. de
Tosc. 94,
100.

34.
Peculiar
character
this gives
to Italian
scenery.

ruins; every thing returns rapidly to its former state, and of so much laboured construction there soon remain only shapeless vestiges covered with briars. The sweet chest-nuts, which grow luxuriantly in almost every part of the Appenines, contribute to uphold this dense population, by the subsistence which they afford in regions where the terrace-cultivation cannot be introduced; while at the summit of all, above this zone of wood, where the frequent clouds nourish a short but sweet herbage, mountain-pastures are to be found similar to the dry and healthful downs of the south of England.¹

Hence arises the romantic character of Italian scenery, the constant combination of a mountain outline, and all the wild features of an alpine country, with the rich vegetation of a southern climate: the intermixture of the wildest and most awful with the softest and most delicate features of nature.—Hence, too, the rudeness, the pastoral simplicity, and the occasional predatory habits to be found in the population: for these rocky and crooked fastnesses render it almost impossible for any police, however vigilant, to track out robbers who are sheltered by their numerous inhabitants. The insalubrious air which still infects the plains, and the devastation which they formerly underwent from mutual warfare, or the plunder of the robber mountain chivalry, have still further contributed to fix industry and population in the mountains; for the malaria does not rise above a certain level, generally as clearly defined as the surface of a lake, on the hills, and the feudal horsemen paused at the entrance of these mountain-asylums of industry. The effects of these causes are still conspicuous. To this day, you may travel for miles together in the plains and valleys, without meeting with a single town or village, or even a human habitation; while the towns cluster on the mountain sides, the houses nestling together on some scanty ledge, with cliffs rising above them, and sinking down abruptly below them, the very *congesta manu præruptis oppida saxis* of Virgil's description, which he even then called "antique walls." They had been the strongholds of the primeval inhabitants of the country, and are still inhabited after the lapse of so many centuries; nothing of the stir and movement of other parts of Europe having penetrated these lonely valleys,²

² Arnold's
Lectures,
166.

and tempted the people to quit their mountain fastnesses for the more accessible dwellings in the plain.

The third region comprises the plains which lie between the western declivity of the Appenines and the Mediterranean. This district comprehends the Marshes of Volterra, still as pestilential as when they proved all but fatal to Hannibal's army: the plain of the Clitumnus, rich as in ancient days in herds and flocks; the Campagna of Rome, once inhabited by numerous tribes, now an almost uninhabited desert; the Pontine Marshes, formerly the abode of thirty nations, now a pestilential swamp; the plain of Pæstum, at one time inhabited by the luxurious Sybarites, now known only by its stately ruins and deserted thickets; the Campagna of Naples, still the scene of industry, elegance, and agricultural riches. The character of these plains is so different from that of the other great divisions of Italy, that it is hardly possible to believe that they belong to the same quarter of the globe. In the Campagna of Naples, indeed, still, as in ancient times, an admirable cultivation brings to perfection the choicest gifts of nature. Magnificent crops of wheat and maize cover the rich and level expanse; rows of elms or willows shelter their harvests from the too scorching rays of the sun, and luxuriant vines, clustering to the very tops of the trees, are trained in festoons from one summit to the other. On its hills the orange, the vine, and the fig-tree flourish in luxuriant beauty; the air is rendered fragrant by their ceaseless perfume; and the prodigy is here exhibited of the fruit and the flower appearing at the same time on the same stem.* The banks of the Clitumnus, too, in Tuscany, still, in some places, maintain their ancient character of being "rich in men and the fatness of the soil."† But, with these exceptions, these plains are covered only with

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35.

Third
region.
The plains
between the
mountains
and the sea.

- * "L'aura che rende gli alberi fioriti
Co' fiori eterni eterno il frutto dura;
E mentra spunta l'un, l'altro matura.
Nel tronco istesso, e tra l'ist'essa foglia
Sovra il nascente fico invecchia il fico;
Pendono a un ramo, un con dorata spoglia,
L'altro con verde, il novo e'l pomo antico.
Lussureggiate serpe alto e germoglia
La torte vite ov'è più l'orto aprico:
Qui l'uva ha in fiori acerba, e qui d'or l'ave
E di piropo, e già di nettar grave."

Gerusalemme Liberata, xvi. 10, 11.

† "Dives viris atque ubere glebæ."

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grass, and exhibit the usual features of the pastoral character. After leaving the centres of elegance and refinement in Florence and Rome, the traveller is astonished to find himself in the midst of uninclosed and desolate plains, over which numerous herds of cattle wander at large, under the care of shepherds mounted on horseback, and armed with lances, after the fashion of the Steppes of Tartary. Every thing in those immense pasture-fields is at variance alike with the plain of Lombardy and the peopled mountains of the Appenines. The farms are of great size, and entirely composed of pasture; the inhabitants few and unhealthy; hardly any villages or hamlets are to be met with; the towns, too, are far distant, and declining; and were it not for the vestiges of a dense population, which still exist in the ruins, scattered at intervals over its surface, one would be led to believe they had never been tenanted by any other inhabitants but the wild-boar and the buffalo.¹

¹ Personal observation.

36.
Unparalleled interest of Rome.

The cities of Italy have been celebrated since the very infancy of civilisation, from the marvellous celebrity in arts and arms which their inhabitants have attained; but they are not so considerable in point of population, as might have been expected, from their long-established fame. Alone, of the whole countries in the world, Italy has *twice* risen to the highest eminence both in the achievements of war and peace. On the ruins of the Capitol, the former mistress of the world, a new empire has arisen, founded not on arms, but on religious reverence, which at one period embraced a wider dominion than had ever been conquered by the arms of the Consuls. Rome in consequence possesses an interest, and exhibits a magnificence, which no other city in the world can boast; for it contains the remains of genius, and the monuments of art, alike of ancient and modern times; and is peopled with the shades at once of Cicero and Virgil, of Tasso and Alfieri, of Raphael and Michael Angelo. The Amphitheatre of Titus still remains in ruined grandeur, beside the Obelisk of Thebes; but it looks down on St John-Lateran, from whence so many laws have issued to the Christian world; the horses of Praxiteles yet adorn the eternal city, but they front the Palace of the Quirinal, the abode of the Supreme Pontiff; the ancient pavement of

the Sacred Way, furrowed by the wheels of an hundred triumphs, again, after a burial of fourteen hundred years, is exposed to the light of the sun, but it leads only to the modern Capitol, where "barefooted friars sing vespers in the remains of the Temple of Jupiter." The Columns of Trajan and Antoninus still surmount the ancient plain of the Campus Martius, but they look down on the crowded and brilliant scene of the modern Corso; the Tomb of Adrian has been bespoiled, but it was so to adorn the "fane of the Vatican; the Dome of St Peter's, the noblest monument which the hands of man have ever raised to the purposes of religion."¹ Before a second Rome appears in the world, a second Republic must have been followed by a second Empire; a second Mythology by a second Pope-dom; a second Forum by a second St Peter's; and the genius of Modern Europe, drawn to a centre by one conquering State, must have been succeeded by another night of a thousand years, during which superstition has subjected the whole civilised world to its sway.

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¹ Gibbon.

During the days of its greatness, Rome is said to have contained three millions of inhabitants; but it may be doubted whether it in reality ever was inhabited by so great a number of souls as modern London.* It is ascertained, by an authentic enumeration, that at the capture of the city by Alaric, it contained 1,200,000 inhabitants. Its present population is only 172,000; and in the time of Napoleon's government, it had sunk to 120,000. Venice, Milan, Florence, and Genoa, so celebrated in history, poetry, and romance, are less considerable in point of wealth and population, than second-rate manufacturing towns of Great Britain; and the only really great city of Italy, Naples, will apparently soon be outstripped in numbers by Glasgow, a provincial town of Scotland.† The industry and population of the great towns of Italy have

37.
Population
of Italy, and
its chief
towns.

* By the census of 1841, London contained 1,864,000 souls, the greatest aggregate of human beings, in a single city, of which the history of the world has preserved an authentic record. Glasgow, next to it in point of number in the British empire, contained 274,000.

† The following is the populations of the principal cities of Italy, according to the latest statistical accounts (1836):—

	Souls.		Souls.		Souls.
Milan,	150,000	Turin,	117,000	Perrugio,	30,000
Venice,	110,000	Genoa,	100,000	Naples,	364,000
Verona,	60,000	Leghorn,	75,000	Rome,	139,000
Padua,	47,500	Alexandria,	35,000	Palermo,	168,000

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¹ Gibbon's
Rome, iv.
91, c. 31.
Malte-
Brun, vii.
283, 490.

sensibly declined during the last three centuries, in consequence of the alteration in the channels of commerce, the result of the rise of Great Britain, and the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope. Florence, which formerly contained 150,000 souls, can now boast of little more than half the number: Venice and Genoa have scarce a third of their former inhabitants. But the industry of the country is undecayed. Commercial wealth, deprived of its former channels of investment, has generally turned to rural occupation,—the towns have declined, but the provinces have increased both in riches and inhabitants, and the population of Italy was never, either in the days of the Emperors, or of the modern Republics, so considerable as it is at the present moment. It amounts at this time (1842,) to nineteen millions of souls, and exceeded sixteen millions in the days of Napoleon; a population which gave 1237 to the square marine league, a density greater than that of either France or England at that period.* ¹

The causes of the extraordinary population, which has thus survived the political decline of modern Italy, and

	Souls.		Souls.		Souls.
Vicenza,	30,000	Coni, . .	18,000	Messina,	40,000
Bergama,	30,500	Adi,	22,000	Catane,	47,000
Parma, .	30,000	Bologna,	71,000	Tarentum,	14,000
Modena, .	29,000	Ferrara,	24,000	Reggio,	17,000
Florence,	78,000	Ravenna,	24,000	Foggio,	21,000 ²
Pisa,	20,000	Ancona, .	30,000		

² Malte-Brun,
vii. 283, 300,
350, 403, 490.

* The following table exhibits the population of the Italian States in 1810 under Napoleon, and in 1832, with the square leagues of territory, and density of the population to the square league:—

	Square Marine Leagues.	Population in 1810.	Population in 1832.	Pop. per Squ. League in 1832.
I. Naples contained,	4,100	4,963,000	5,810,000	1,414
Sicily and Lesser Isles,	1,360	1,635,000	1,682,000	1,236
Total of Naples,	5,460	2,598,000	7,492,000	1,372
II. Kingdom of Sardinia—				
Piedmont and Savoy,	2,050	3,470,000	3,434,000.	1,675
Sardinia,	1,600	520,000	490,087	306
Total of Sardinia, &c.,	3,650	3,990,000	3,924,087	1,174
III. Kingdom of Lombardy and Venice—				
Province of Milan, .	1,042	2,082,000	2,416,000	2,424
of Venice, .	1,127	1,982,000	2,041,000	2,017
Total of Lombardy } and Venice, . . . }	2,169	4,064,000	4,457,000	2,210
IV. Ecclesiastical States,	2,230	2,346,000	2,850,000	1,266
V. Tuscany and Elba,	1,098	1,180,000	1,282,000	1,167
VI. Parma, Placentia, and } Guastalla, . . . }	228	377,000	433,000	1,538
VII. Modena,	272	332,000	385,000	1,415
VIII. Lucca, Carrara, and Massa,	54	138,000	144,500	2,675
IX. Republic of St Marino,	5	7,000	8,000	1,700

the decay of the principal seats of its manufacturing industry, is to be found in the direction of its capital to agricultural investment, and the increasing industry with which, during a long course of centuries, its inhabitants have overcome the sterility of nature. The admirable cultivation which has crept up the mountain sides, furnishes food for a numerous population at the height of several thousand feet above the sea, and explains the singular fact, at first sight so inexplicable to a northern observer, that in scenes where, at a distance, nothing but continued foliage meets the eye, the traveller finds, on a nearer approach, villages and hamlets, and all the signs of a numerous peasantry. The terrace gardening of the hills in Tuscany, the irrigations in the valley of the Arno, are extraordinary monuments of human industry. Means have been taken to avert or regulate the devastating torrents which descend, charged with autumnal rains, from the mountains, and to diffuse them in an infinity of little canals over the whole face, whether broken or level, of the country. The chestnut forests, which grow spontaneously in the higher regions, furnish subsistence for a large part of the peasantry; while, on the summit of all, the cool pastures of the Appenines, from whence the shepherd can see from sea to sea, feed vast herds of cattle; and flocks of sheep and goats find a delicious pasture, which, during the summer months, are driven thither from the great pasture-farms of the Maremme, then brown, parched, and intersected by cracks from the long-continued drought. Thus every part of the country is made to contribute to the use of man; and Italy exhibits the extraordinary spectacle, interesting alike to the philanthropist and the economical observer, of a country in which population and civilisation have withstood the

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38.

Cause of
this vast
population
in Italy.

SUMMARY.

	1810.	1832.
Naples in Italy,	4,963,000	5,810,000
Piedmont, without Savoy and Sardinia,	3,020,000	3,016,000
Lombardy and Venice,	4,064,000	4,457,000
Ecclesiastical States,	2,346,000	2,850,000
Tuscany and Elba,	1,180,000	1,282,000
Parma, Placentia, and Guastalla,	372,000	413,000
Modena,	332,000	385,000
Lucca, Carrara, and Massa,	138,000	144,500
St Marino,	7,000	9,000
Italy Proper,	16,407,000	18,790,500

1 Malte-Brun,
vii. 287, 487.
and Stat.
d'Italie, 1819.

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¹ Chateau-
vieux, 80,
58, 157.
Young's
Travels, ii.
152, 157.
Sismondi's
Agric. de
la Toscane,
102, 156.

39.

Great divi-
sion of land
in the Ap-
penines,
and its ad-
mirable
effects.

² Chateau-
vieux, 80, 97.
Young's
Travels, ii.
152, 157.
Sism. Agric.
de la Tosc.
102. Rau-
mer's Italy,
ii. 28.
Cadastre,
1832. Per-
sonal obser-
vation.

successive decline of *two* periods of political greatness, and the human race has found the means of happiness and increase amidst the destruction of all the sources of commercial prosperity, in the steady application of wealth and industry to the cultivation of the soil. It is a spectacle on which the eye of an inhabitant of these islands may well rest with complacency; for it affords, perhaps, the only solid ground for hope and confidence in contemplating the future fate of the people of this empire, now resting, in a great degree, on the splendid, but insecure and shifting, foundation of commercial greatness.¹

Land in the Appenines is very much subdivided; there are eighty-seven thousand owners of little freeholds in Tuscany alone, producing below £5 sterling a-year, and thirty-one thousand between that and £25.* It is in the unremitting industry and constant toil, generated by the attachments which this general diffusion of property produces, that one great cause of the extraordinary population and general wellbeing of the people in the mountain regions is to be found. It has not been the result, as in Republican France, of the violent spoliation of the clerical and the higher orders, nor of the boundless expansion of civilised man through the unappropriated recesses of the forest, as in North America. It has been the simple effect of industry steadily pursued, and frugality unceasingly practised, in a country not revolutionised and wholly appropriated during a long series of centuries. And what has been the consequence? Why, that Tuscany now exhibits the marvellous, and, to an economical observer, highly interesting combination of ancient civilisation with social felicity, of density of population with general wellbeing, of declining commercial prosperity with increasing agricultural opulence. The high wages of manufacturing industry have not there been wasted in intoxication or devoted to extravagance: they were invested during the days of their prosperity in numerous little freeholds, which at once elevated the character and improved the tastes of their possessors, and have communicated the same habits to their descendants;² and, in consequence, Tuscany has surmounted equally the ruin of its commercial establishments and the fall of its political independence; and

* Cadastre of 1828, given in Räumers's Italy, ii. 28.

population, duly regulated by the elevated standard of comfort among the poor, exhibits the features of general wellbeing in the latest stages of national existence. Another proof among the many which history affords of the eternal truth, that the real issues of national, equally as of individual, felicity are to be found in the habits of the people; and that no misfortunes, how great soever, are irremediable, except such as undermine their virtue.

In a political point of view, however, the importance of Italy is at an end; and the garden of Europe seems destined to no other fate, during the remainder of European story, but that of being the prize of the most valiant and powerful of the transalpine nations. Still its inhabitants are doomed to utter the mournful lamentation:

"Vincitrice o vinta, sempre asserva." *

The cause of this is twofold. Italy, though overrun successively by the Goths and the Lombards, never was the resting-place of so considerable a portion of the northern nations, as to acquire the magnitude and consistence of modern empires. It was broken into small separate states, and when civilisation revived, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it was on the model, and according to the ideas of antiquity, that industry and population were distributed. The Forum, equally as in Athens, Corinth, or Rome, was the centre alike of power and of deliberation in the modern Italian republics: the subject territory was associated in none of the duties of government. Monarchy had not given its states the unity and vigour of undivided administration. Its civilisation was that of the city, not of the tribe. No representative system united its inhabitants with the dominant burgh: the rule of a few thousand citizens was felt to be insupportable by the rural inhabitants, because self-interest regulated all their proceedings, and central power had given them none of its protection. Hence the territory of the Italian republics was limited to the district which a single city could govern: and a country thus subdivided was wholly unable to withstand the shock of the great transalpine monarchies, to whom the feudal institutions had given unity and vigour, and who had inherited from their Gothic ancestors the spirit of conquest.

* *"Conquering or conquered, ever enslaved."*

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46.
Political
weakness
of Italy.

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41.
Loss of
military
spirit by
the people.

The second cause which has paralysed Italy, in a political point of view, in recent times, has been the loss, speaking generally, of the military spirit by its inhabitants. That its charming climate is capable of bringing to maturity a race of heroes and patriots as well as one of poets and artists, need be told to none who are acquainted with the glorious story of Rome in ancient, and the not less heart-stirring annals of the Italian republics in modern times. But the history of Italy for the last three hundred years, and since the independence of the lesser states has been merged in the ascendant of the transalpine monarchies, has completely demonstrated that the warlike virtues are no longer in estimation, and that the arts and enjoyments of peace have entirely disqualified them for the generous sacrifices, the heroic self-denial, which are necessary, either to attain national independence, or to support military courage. When led by French officers, and placed beside French regiments, the inhabitants of Lombardy, during the wars of Napoleon, attained a high and deserved reputation; but so did the Portuguese and Hindoos under British direction, in the campaigns of the Peninsula and India. The peasantry of every country, even the most effeminate, will fight well if gallantly led: it is in the impossibility of finding such gallant leaders among their own higher classes, that the never-failing mark of national decline is to be found. Often individually courageous, the Italians, in a national point of view, have been, for centuries, totally destitute of the military virtues; they have never, since the defeat of the invasion of Charles VIII., in the close of the fifteenth century, been able to stand before the shock of the French or German bayonets. Experience has not yet enabled us to determine, whether this decline from the heroic courage of ancient times is to be ascribed to the enervating effects of a delicious climate, or the general selfishness produced by a long period of pacific enjoyment. But the future history of England will solve the problem, for its winters are not likely to be ever less rigorous than they were in the days of Nelson and Wellington; and if its inhabitants lose their courage, it can be ascribed to no other cause but the corrupting influence of commercial greatness.

The character of the Italians at this time is so different

from what it was in the days of the ancient Romans, that it is hardly possible to believe that they belong to the same country. Unlike their sturdy and heroic progenitors, they are almost entirely absorbed in the arts and elegancies of life. And while their political consideration and military reputation have become extinct, they are now distinguished chiefly, if not entirely, by their extraordinary genius in the fine arts; and the universal spread of a refined taste for the works of imagination, and an enthusiastic perception of their charms, to an extent among the middle and labouring classes wholly unknown among the transalpine states. Reversing the maxims by which the ancient republic rose to greatness, they have devoted themselves to the formation of the living canvass, the breathing brass, and left to others the care of conquering the world.* In this respect, they bear a much closer resemblance to the inhabitants of Greece than those of Rome in former times. Passionately attached to the elegancies of life, lively and ingenious in conversation, endowed with an ardent imagination and a refined taste, they have risen, like the ancient Athenians, to the very highest eminence in the fine arts, and, like the Greeks of old, continue in these respects to give law to their conquerors long after they have sunk before the ascendant of energy and courage among ruder nations.

At the period of the French invasion of Italy in 1796, the total forces of the Italian States amounted to one hundred and sixty thousand men under arms, which could with ease have been raised, from a population of sixteen millions, to three hundred thousand. But, with the exception of the Piedmontese troops, this military array was of no real use; except when led on by French officers, the soldiers of the other Italian states were almost valueless, at least amidst the shock of the transalpine nations. Bitterly did Italy suffer for the decay in her national spirit, and extinction of her military courage. With the French invasion commenced a long period of suffering: tyranny, under the name of liberty;

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1796.

42.

Present
character of
the people.

43.

Calamities
which the
French
invasion
brought on
Italy.

* "Exeudent alii spirantia mollius aera,
Credo equidem; vivos ducent de marmore vultus;
Orabunt causas melius, coelique meatus
Describent radio, et surgentia sidera dicent:
Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento;
Hæ tibi erunt artes; pacisque imponere morem,
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbus."—*Æneid*, vi. 850.

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¹ Bot. i. 298.
Th. viii. 220.
Nap. iii. 29,
130.

44.
Description
of the plain
of Lom-
bardy in a
military
point of
view.

² Nap. iii.
120, 131;
and Person-
al observa-
tion.

rapine, under that of generosity; excitement among the poor, spoliation of the rich; clamour in public against the nobility, and adulation of them in private; use made of the lovers of freedom by those who despised them; and revolt against tyranny, by those who aimed only at being tyrants; general praise of liberty in words, and universal extinction of it in action; the stripping of churches; the robbery of hospitals; the levelling of the palaces of the great, the destruction of the cottages of the poor;—all that military license has of most terrible, all that despotic authority has of most oppressive. Then did her people feel, that neither riches of soil nor glories of recollection—neither a southern sun, nor the perfection of art, can save a nation from destruction, if it has lost the vigour to uphold, or the courage to defend them.¹

Although the plains of Piedmont and Lombardy, where the war was to be carried on, present few positions, which, from the inequality of the ground, are capable of defence, yet it was in some places one of the most defensible countries in Europe. Its great rivers and numerous fortified towns were the cause of this peculiarity. At its western end, the principal passes leading over the Alps into France were closed by mountain forts, the strength of which had been amply proved by the French during the war of the Succession; and if these were surmounted, and the plain of Piedmont were reached, a strong chain of fortresses was prepared to arrest the steps of the invader. Coni, Turin, Alexandria, Tortona, Voghera, Genoa, Gavi, and Ivrea, formed so many bulwarks, the possession of which was essential to a firm footing on the Italian plains, and which it was yet difficult to besiege, from the obstacles to regular operations, arising from the English having the undisputed command at sea, and the extreme difficulty of transporting heavy battering-trains over the rugged and inhospitable summits of the Alps. But, if these fortresses were ever reduced, or won by treaty, they would form the best possible base for offensive operations, which would render it probably impossible to stop the invader's progress till he reached the banks of the Adige.²

There, however, most serious obstacles awaited an invading army. The great defence against the passage of a hostile force over the plain of Lombardy is to be found in the number, depth, and rapidity of the Alpine rivers,

which, descending from the glaciers of Switzerland, fall generally at right angles into the Po, near the centre of the level expanse. Not only are these rivers at all times deep and rapid, but they have this peculiarity, arising from the melting of the snows during the warm season, in the higher Alps, that they flow with the most impetuous torrents in the height of summer, the season in other respects most favourable for military operations. The art of man has improved upon these great natural barriers, and strong fortified towns protect the principal and often the only bridges over their otherwise impassable floods. The Adige, in particular, presented an uncommonly strong line of defence in these respects; its deep and ample stream, from the foot of the Alpine cliffs behind Verona, to its junction with the Po, was strongly fortified at every point where a passage could be attempted; and the line of fortresses which guarded its bridges, Verona, Legnago, and Peschiera, could only be reduced by operations in form, and by the aid of heavy artillery. Mantua, protected by its strong bastions and surrounding lakes, would itself require an army for its reduction: the rugged banks and swollen streams of the Mincio, the Piave, the Tagliamento, the Brenta, formed so many defensible positions to which the defending army could retire; while the broad channel of the Po secured one flank from being turned, and the vast natural fortress of the Tyrol, on the other, presented a sure refuge in case of disaster. It already might have been anticipated, what experience in the sequel amply demonstrated, that it was amidst the intricacies of these rivers, fortresses, and mountains, that the great contest for the empire of Italy would take place.¹

When Napoleon assumed the command of the Republican army in the end of March, he found every thing in the most miserable state. The efficient force under arms, and ready for offensive operations, amounted only to forty-two thousand men; but it was continually reinforced by troops from the depots in the interior, after his successes commenced; so that, notwithstanding the losses of the campaign, it was maintained throughout nearly at that amount. The guns did not exceed sixty pieces, and the cavalry was almost dismounted; but the garrisons in the

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1796.

45.

Its rivers as
a source of
defence.

¹ Napoleon,
iii. 142, 146.
Personal
observation.

46.

State of the
French army
when Napo-
leon took the
command.
March 27.

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1796.

rear, amounting to eight thousand men, could furnish supplies when the war was removed from the frontier, and the arsenals of Nice and Antibes were well provided with artillery. For a very long period the soldiers of all ranks had suffered the extremity of want. Perched on the inhospitable summits of the Appenines during the whole of the dreadful winter of 1795-6, they had enjoyed neither tents nor shelter; magazines they had none; their shoes were worn out, their clothing in rags; the troops had for a long time been placed on half a ration a day, and even this scanty supply was for the most part procured by marauding expeditions of the soldiers into the neighbouring valleys. The officers, from the effect of the depreciation of paper, had for a long time in reality received only eight francs a month of pay; and the staff was entirely on foot. On one occasion, the Directory had awarded a gratification of three louis-d'or to each general of division; and the future marshals and princes of the empire subsisted for long on the humble present. But, considered with reference to their skill and warlike qualities, the army presented a very different aspect, and was, beyond all question, the most efficient one which the Republic possessed. Composed, for the most part, of young soldiers, whom the great levies of 1793 had brought into the field, they had been inured to hardship and privations during the subsequent campaigns in the Pyrenees and Maritime Alps; a species of warfare which, by leading detached parties continually into difficult and perilous situations, is singularly calculated to strengthen the frame, and augment the intelligence of the soldier. "Poverty," says Napoleon, "privations, misery, are the school of good soldiers." Its spirit had been greatly elevated by the successful result of the battle of Loano; and its chiefs, Massena, Augereau, Serrurier, and Berthier, had already become distinguished, and, like stars in the firmament on the approach of twilight, began to give token of their future light.¹

Berthier was chief of the staff, a situation which he continued to hold in all the campaigns of Napoleon, down to the battle of Waterloo. He was son of the Governor of the Hotel de la Guerre, at Versailles, who had formerly been chief engineer of the armies under Louis XV., and colonel of the corps of geographical engineers; so that he

¹ Nap. iii.
135, 136, 151.
Jom. viii. 57,
59. Hard.
iii. 306.
Th. viii. 220,
221.

47.
Character of
its officers.
Berthier.
His early
history.

enjoyed the advantages of respectable birth and a military education. He was born at Versailles on the 28th November 1753, and was at this period forty-three years of age. He had entered the army at the age of seventeen, and, in 1778, had served with such distinction under Rochambeau in America, that, before the end of that war, he had risen to the rank of colonel—a very unusual thing in those days for an officer who did not possess the advantages of patrician birth. In 1789 he was appointed major-general of the National Guard at Versailles, in which character he rendered the Royal Family some service, during the stormy days of the 5th and 6th October. His disposition, however, decidedly marked him as for the popular side, and, in 1790, he presented a petition to the National Assembly, praying for the erection of a monument to the soldiers killed during the democratic revolt of Nancy. On the 17th February 1791, he behaved with equal coolness and conduct, on occasion of the furious mob which attempted to break into and pillage the chateau of Bellevue, the residence of the princesses, aunts of Louis XVI. His good conduct on this occasion gave great umbrage to the Jacobin party, and he was glad to secure his safety by accepting the situation of adjutant-general of the army of old Marshal Luckner. Dumourier, however, who had a command in it, perceived that his capacity was not equal to the general direction of affairs, and he wrote to the Directory, that he was ruining the old marshal. He was in consequence removed early in 1792 to La Vendée, where he acted in a subordinate situation with distinction; and at the battle of Saumur, in 1793, he had three horses shot under him. He was afterwards chief of the staff to Custin, and it was with no small difficulty, and only by consummate prudence, that he avoided the fate of his unfortunate general. Immediately after the 9th Thermidor, he was sent by the Government as chief of the staff to Kellerman, in the army of the Alps; and it was in that capacity he was found by Napoleon, when he took the command of that army, in April 1796.¹

Active, indefatigable alike on horseback and in the cabinet, he was admirably qualified to discharge the duties of that important situation, without being possessed of the originality and decision requisite for a commander-in-chief. Perfectly master of the geography of every country which

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¹ *Biog. Univ.*
sup. lviil.
103, 104.

48.
His charac-
ter.

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the army was to enter, understanding thoroughly the use of maps, he was able to calculate with admirable precision the time requisite for the different corps to arrive at the ground assigned to them, as well as to direct in a lucid manner the course they were to pursue. He was precision itself in his habits; and above all possessed of such an extraordinary faculty of enduring fatigue, that he was never, on any occasion, whatever labour he had previously undergone, unable to resume the duties either of the field or the cabinet. Faithful and entirely trustworthy, he obeyed his instructions with docility, readiness, and perfect silence. A secret divulged to Berthier, was as safe as if its possessor was in his grave; and these qualities made him an invaluable assistant to Napoleon. But he had no genius in his character; he was incapable alike of great conceptions and generous feelings: an admirable second in command, he was wholly unfit to be general-in-chief.¹

¹ Nap. III.
185. Biog.
Univ. (Ber-
thier.) lviii.
104, 105.

49.
Early his-
tory of Mas-
sena.

Massena, a native of Nice, was born on the 6th May 1758, of respectable parents, in the mercantile line; but having lost his father early in life, he never received an education suitable to the elevated duties to which he was afterwards called in life. One of his relations, a captain of a trading vessel, out of humanity took the young orphan on board his ship, and he made several voyages with him; but having conceived a dislike for a sea life, he entered the army as a private soldier in the year 1775, in the regiment Royal-Italien, in which one of his uncles was captain. Ere long he was made a corporal; and after he had become a marshal of France, he said that that step was the one in his whole career which had cost him most trouble to gain, and which had given him most satisfaction when acquired. His intelligence and good conduct soon promoted him to the rank of sergeant and adjutant; but in those days of aristocratic exclusion, he could not rise higher,—the epaulettes of a sub-lieutenant being rarely conferred except on those of noble birth. After having served fourteen years, he became weary of a life of inactivity, and retired in 1789 to his native city, where he made an advantageous marriage; but no sooner did the Revolution break out, and the military career become open to all ranks, than he resumed his old profession, and was soon raised by the suffrages of the soldiers to the rank of adjutant-major of the battalion of

the Var, and subsequently to that of colonel of the same regiment. His great military abilities now rapidly ensured him promotion. He was made general of brigade in August 1793, and general of division in December of the same year; and it was mainly owing to his able movements, that the great victory was gained in the defile of Saorgio in August 1794, and on the Col de San Giacomo, in September 1795. In effect, he had acquired, by the force of his talents, the chief direction of the army of Italy, during these two campaigns; and it was by the effect chiefly of his councils, that their brilliant successes had been obtained.¹

Gifted by nature with a robust frame and an undaunted spirit, indefatigable in exertion, unconquerable in resolution, he was to be seen night and day on horseback, among the rocks and the mountains. Decided, brave, and intrepid, full of ambition, his leading characteristic was obstinacy; a quality which, according as it is rightly or wrongly directed, leads to the greatest successes or the most ruinous disasters. His conversation gave few indications of genius; but at the first cannon-shot his mental energy redoubled, and, when surrounded by danger, his thoughts were clear and forcible. In the midst of the dying and the dead, of balls sweeping away those who encircled him, Massena was himself, and gave his orders with the greatest coolness and precision. Even after defeat, he recommenced the struggle as if he had come off victorious; and by these means saved the Republic at the battle of Zurich. But these great qualities were disfigured by as remarkable vices. He was rapacious, sordid, and avaricious; mean in character, selfish in disposition, he shared the profits of the contractors and commissaries, and never could keep himself clear from acts of speculation.²

Augereau, born in the faubourg St Marceau, on the 11th November 1757, was the son of a common mason. In infancy he gave no small disquiet to his parents by his quarrelsome and fractious disposition, insomuch that they were glad to get quit of him by enlisting him as a private dragoon in the regiment of Burgundy. He was soon, however, dismissed the corps for a serious offence, and returned to Paris penniless and in disgrace. Here, however, his lofty stature and military air again attracted the attention of the recruiting sergeants, and he was enrolled

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¹ Biog des
Cont. xv. 67,
68. (Mas-
sena.)

50.
His charac-
ter.

² Nap. iii
187.
O'Meara, i
239.

51.
Early his-
tory of
Augereau.

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in the regiment of carabineers, commanded by the Marquis Poyanna. There, however, his mischievous disposition a second time broke out, and he was expelled from his new corps for carrying off his captain's horses to sell them in Switzerland. Again thrown loose on the world, he became a fencing-master in the little town of Lodi; and having soon tired of its monotonous life, he made his way to Naples, where he entered the Royal Guard, and, by his skill in the use of arms, was soon made a sergeant. After serving there for some years, he resumed his profession of a fencing-master, which he followed for a considerable time in that capital with success. The breaking out of the Revolution in France, however, soon attracted him to the great centre of plunder and advancement; he returned in December 1792 to Paris, and immediately enlisted in a regiment of volunteers which was then raising, and which soon afterwards marched to La Vendée. There his activity, skill, and courage speedily became so conspicuous, that he was chosen by the men as their colonel. The distinction thus acquired procured for him the situation of adjutant-general of the army of the Pyrenees, where he signalised himself in several actions under Dugommier, particularly on occasion of the recapture of Bellegarde in 1794, and the actions on the Floria in the spring following. After the termination of the Spanish war, he was transferred, with a division of twelve thousand strong, to the Army of Italy; and at the outset of his career there, bore a prominent part in the decisive battle of Loano, which opened to Napoleon, who soon after assumed the command, the gates of Italy.¹

¹ Blog. Univ. sup. lvi. 547, 548. (Augereau.)

52.
His character.

With little education, hardly any knowledge, no grasp of mind, he was yet beloved by the soldiers, from the order and discipline which he always enforced. Sprung from the ranks, he knew how to excite and rule the men with whom he had formerly served. He was severe and unrelenting in discipline, stern in enforcing obedience to his commands, but willing to allow his soldiers, if they proved obedient, every species of license at the expense of the inhabitants of the conquered territory. His attacks were conducted with courage and regularity, and he led his columns with invincible resolution during the fire; but he had not the moral firmness requisite for lasting

success, and was frequently thrown into unreasonable dejection shortly after his greatest triumphs. He had nothing chivalrous or elevated in his character; his manners were coarse, his ideas often savage, and he had no other idea of governing men but the brute force against which, in youth, he had so much revolted, and to which in age he was so much inclined. His political opinions led him to sympathise with the extreme republicans; but no man was less fitted by nature, either to understand, or shine in, the civil contests in which he was always so desirous to engage, and, like many others of that party, he showed himself at last equally ungrateful to his benefactor, and despicable by his conduct in adversity.¹

Serrurier, born in the department of the Aisne, was a major at the commencement of the Revolution, and incurred many dangers in its early wars, from the suspicion of a secret leaning to the aristocracy under which he laboured. He was born at Laon in 1742, so that he was past fifty when the revolutionary war broke out. Rapidly raised to eminence, as all the officers of that period were, by the election of the soldiers, in the army of the Alps he distinguished himself as general of division commanding the French right wing, in the capture of the Col di Fermo, in July 1795, and at the battle of Final, on the 11th December in the same year. No man was a better soldier, but he had not the qualities requisite for a general in separate command; and accordingly, after the first campaign of 1796, he never was entrusted by Napoleon with the direction of any considerable operations. He was brave in person, firm in conduct, and severe in discipline; but, though he gained the battle of Mondovi, and took Mantua, he was not in general fortunate in his operations, and became a marshal of France with less military glory than any of his other illustrious compeers.²

On the other hand, the Allies had above fifty thousand men, and 200 pieces of cannon; while the Sardinian army, of twenty-four thousand, guarded the avenues of Dauphiné and Savoy, and was opposed to the army of Kellerman of nearly equal strength. Their forces were thus distributed: Beaulieu, a veteran of seventy-five, with thirty thousand combatants, entirely Austrians,³ and 140 pieces of cannon, was on the extreme right of the French, and in commu-

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¹ Nap. iii.
168.

53.
Serrurier.

² Biog. des
Cont. xix.
159. Nap.
iii. 190.

54.
State of the
Allied
forces.

³ Th. viii.
223. Jom.
viii. 57.
Nap. iii. 134,
136. Hard.
iii. 304, 305.

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55.
Napoleon's
first procla-
mation to
his soldiers,
and plan of
the cam-
paign.

nication with the English fleet; while Colli, with twenty thousand men, and sixty pieces, was in a line with him to the north, and covered Ceva and Coni. Generally speaking, the French occupied the crest of the mountains, while the Allies were stationed in the valleys leading into the Italian plains.

Napoleon arrived at Nice on the 27th March, and soon gave indications of the great designs which he was meditating, by the following striking proclamation to his troops:—"Soldiers! you are almost naked, half-starved: the Government owes you much, and can give you nothing. Your patience, your courage, in the midst of these rocks, have been admirable, but they reflect no splendour on your arms. I am about to conduct you into the most fertile plains of the earth. Rich provinces, opulent cities, will soon be in your power: there you will find abundant harvests, honour and glory. Soldiers of Italy, will you fail in courage?" "Famine, cold, and misery," said the young general: "these are the school of good soldiers."* His plan was to penetrate into Piedmont by the Col de Cadibone, the lowest part of the ridge which divides France from Italy, and separate the Austrian from the Piedmontese armies, by pressing with the weight of his forces on the weak cordon which united them. For this purpose, it was necessary that the bulk of the troops should assemble on the extreme right—a delicate and perilous operation in presence of a superior enemy, but which was rendered comparatively safe by the snow which encumbered the lofty ridges that separated the two armies. Early in April, the whole French columns were in motion towards Genoa, while the French minister demanded from the Senate of that city leave to pass the Bochetta, and the keys of Gavi, that being the chief route from the maritime coasts to the interior of Piedmont. At the same time Beaulieu, in obedience to the directions of the Aulic Council, was, on his side, resuming the offensive, and directing his columns also towards his own left at Genoa, with a view to establish a connexion with that important city and the English fleet. He left his right

1 Jom. viii.
64. Nap.
iii. 136, 138.
Th. viii. 138,
224. Hard.
iii. 307.

* "Le faim, le froid, et la misère, voilà l'école des bons soldats." Our young guardsmen and dragoon officers will scarcely admit this assertion, but the Lacedæmonians thought the same:—"Labor in venatu, cursus ab Eurotâ, fames, frigus, altis, his rebus Lacedæmoniorum epulæ condiuntur."

wing at Dego, pushed his centre, under D'Argenteau, to the ridge of MONTENOTTE, and himself advanced with his left, by Bochetta and Genoa, towards Voltri, along the sea-coast.

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The two armies, respectively defiling towards the sea-coast through the higher Alps, came into contact at Montenotte; the Austrian general having advanced his centre to that place, in order to cut asunder the French force, by falling on its left flank, and intercept, by occupying Savona, the road by the Cornice, which they were pursuing, from Provence to Genoa. The Imperialists, ten thousand strong, encountered at Montenotte only Colonel Rampon, at the head of twelve hundred men, whom they forced to retire to the Monte Prato and the old redoubt of Monte Legino; but this brave officer, feeling the vital importance of this post to the whole army, which, if it was lost, would have been cut in two, defended the fort with heroic courage, repeatedly repulsed the impetuous attacks of the Austrians, and in the midst of the fire made his soldiers swear to conquer or die. With great difficulty and severe loss, he maintained his ground till nightfall; but this heroism saved the French army, and prevented the star of Napoleon from being extinguished in the very commencement of its course. The brave Roccavina, who commanded the Imperialists, was severely wounded in the last assault, and forced to be removed to Montenotte. Before retiring, he strenuously urged his successor, D'Argenteau, to renew the attack during the night, and gain possession of the fort before the distant aid of the Republicans could advance to its relief; but this advice that officer, not equally impressed with the value of time and the vital importance of that position, declined to follow. If he had adopted it, and succeeded, the fate of the campaign and of the world might have been changed; but, as it was, the French general speedily hastened to Rampon's relief, and converted his danger into the means of achieving a brilliant victory.¹

56.
Battle of
Montenotte.

¹ Jom. viii.
69. Th. viii.
226. Bot. I.
306. Hard.
iii. 311, 312.
Nap. iii. 139.

When this attack was going forward, Napoleon was at Savona; but no sooner did he receive intelligence from Rampon, than he resolved to envelope the Austrian force, which had thus pushed into the centre of his line of march. With this view, having stationed Cervoni to make head

57.
Success of
the French.

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12th April.

against Beaulieu in front of Voltri, he himself set out after sunset from Savona with the divisions of Massena and Serrurier, and having crossed the ridge of Cadibone, occupied the heights in rear of Montenotte. The night was dark and tempestuous, which entirely concealed his movements from the Austrians. At daybreak the latter found themselves surrounded on all sides. La Harpe and Rampon, issuing from the redoubt of Monte Prato, attacked them in front, while Massena and JOUBERT* under Napoleon pressed their rear; they resisted long and bravely, but were at length broken by superior forces, and completely routed, with the loss of five pieces of cannon, two thousand prisoners, and above one thousand killed and wounded. This great success paralysed the movements of Beaulieu, who had advanced unopposed beyond Voltri; he hastened back with the bulk of his forces to Millesimo, but such was the circuit they were obliged to take, that it was two days before he arrived at that place to support the ruined centre of his line.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
141. Th.
viii. 227.
Jom. viii.
70, 73.

58.
Its great
conse-
quences.
Action at
Millesimo.

This victory, by opening to the French the plains of Piedmont, and piercing the centre of the Allies, completely separated the Austrian and Sardinian armies; the former concentrated at Dego to cover the road to Milan, and the latter round Millesimo to protect the entrance into Piedmont. Napoleon, in possession of a central position, resolved to attack them both at once, although by drawing together their detachments from all quarters, they had more than repaired the losses of Montenotte. On the 13th, Augereau, on the left, assailed the forces at Millesimo, where the Piedmontese were posted, while the divisions of Massena and La Harpe descended the valley and moved

Early history
of Joubert.

* Joubert, whom an early death alone prevented from rising to the highest destinies, was born in 1769—that year so fertile in great men—at Pont de Vaux, in the district of Briare and department of Ain, in the Jura. Passionately fond of the military profession, he entered a regiment of artillery at the age of fifteen. His father, however, who was a judge in that town, prevailed on him to leave the army, and follow the bar; and he was pursuing his legal studies at Dijon when the Revolution broke out. He immediately entered, upon that event, the first battalion of National Guards which was raised in his vicinity; and it was soon perceived that he was much more occupied in his military exercises than his legal studies. Ardent, enterprising, enthusiastic, he shared in all the excitement, political and military, of the period; and finding the career of the bar insupportably dull in those stirring times, he again enlisted as a private in a regiment of grenadiers. The choice of the soldiers rapidly raised him through the various grades above the lowest; and in September 1793, he was in command of thirty grenadiers in a redoubt on the Col di Tende, where, being surrounded by five hundred Piedmontese, he was at length made prisoner.

towards Dego. With such fury was the attack on the Piedmontese conducted, that the passes were forced, and General Provera, who commanded, was driven, with two thousand men, into the ruins of the old castle of Cossaria. He was immediately assaulted there by superior forces; but the Piedmontese, skilled in mountain warfare, poured down upon their adversaries such a shower of stones and rocks, that whole companies were swept away at once, and Joubert, who was in front animating the soldiers, was severely wounded. After many ineffectual efforts, the Republicans desisted on the approach of night, and intrenched themselves at the foot of the eminence on which the castle was situated, to prevent the escape of the garrison.¹

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¹ Nap. iii.
143, 144.
Hard. iii.
312, 313.
Th. viii.
229.

The following day was decisive; Coli and the Piedmontese on the left made repeated efforts to disengage Provera, but their exertions were in vain; and after seeing all their columns repulsed, that brave officer, destitute of provisions and water, was compelled to lay down his arms, with fifteen hundred men. Meanwhile, Napoleon himself, with the divisions of Massena and La Harpe, attacked and carried Dego after an obstinate resistance, while Joubert made himself master of the heights of Biestro. The retreat of the Austrians was obstructed by the artillery, which blocked up the road in the defile of Spegno, and the soldiers had no other resource but to disperse and seek their safety on the mountains. Thirteen pieces of artillery and three thousand prisoners fell into the hands of the victors.² No sooner was this success achieved, than the indefatigable conqueror moved forward the division of Augereau, now

59.
And at
Dego.
April 14.

² Nap. iii.
143, 144.
Th. viii.
229, 230.
Hard. iii.
312, 315.

after a desperate resistance. Being afterwards exchanged, he returned to his paternal home at Pont de Vaux, where he narrowly escaped destruction in consequence of the indignant vehemence with which, in a club of which he was a member, he denounced the sanguinary and atrocious cruelty of Albitte, the commissioner of the Convention, who was then desolating the department. In 1794 he was appointed adjutant-general to the army of the Alps; and, in July 1795, he was unsuccessful in an attack on a fortified position at Melagno, occupied by 3000 grenadiers. Kellerman, however, who saw his abilities, continued him in the command, notwithstanding this reverse. He distinguished himself by his conduct and intrepidity at the battle of Loano, on which occasion he was made general of brigade on the field of battle, which rank he held when Napoleon took the command of the army in April 1796. He had the soul of a hero as well as the eye of a general; and was distinguished, like Napoleon, Hoche, and Dessaix, by that ardent spirit and thirst for glory, which is the invariable characteristic of great minds.—See *Biographie Universelle* (JOUBERT), xxii. 47.

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60.
Bold ad-
vance of
Wukasso-
wich to
Dego, which
in the end,
fails.

disengaged by the surrender of Provera, to the important heights of Monte Zemolo, the occupation of which completed the separation of the Austrian and Piedmontese armies. Beaulieu retired to Acqui, on the road to Milan, and Coli towards Ceva, to cover Turin.

Meanwhile the brave Wukassowich, at the head of six thousand Austrian grenadiers, made a movement which, if supported, might have completely re-established the affairs of the Allies. Separated from the body of the Imperial forces, he advanced to Dego, with the intention of forming a junction with D'Argenteau, who he imagined still occupied that place. Great was his surprise when he found it in the hands of the enemy; but instantly taking his resolution, like a brave man, he attacked and carried the place, making prisoners six hundred French, and regaining all the artillery lost on the preceding day. But this success not being supported by the other divisions of the Allied army, which were in full retreat, only led to the destruction of the brave men who had achieved it. Napoleon rapidly returned to the spot, and commenced a vigorous attack with superior forces. They were received with such gallantry by the Austrians, that the Republican columns were in the first instance repulsed in disorder, and the general-in-chief hastened to the spot to restore the combat; but at length General Lanusse, putting his hat on the point of his sword, led them back to the charge, and carried the place, with the loss of fifteen hundred men to the Imperialists, who escaped with difficulty by the road to Acqui, after abandoning all the artillery they had retaken. In this action Napoleon was particularly struck by the gallantry of a young chief of battalion, whom he made a colonel on the spot, and who continued ever after the companion of his glory. His name was LANNES, afterwards Duke of Montebello, and one of the most heroic marshals of the empire.¹

¹ Jom. viii.
85. Nap.
iii. 145.

61.
Early his-
tory of
Lannes.

Jean Lannes was born at Lesbours, on the 11th April 1769, in the same year with Ney, Wellington, and a host of other heroes. He was descended of humble and obscure parents, and was at first bred to the trade of a dyer, which he quitted in 1792, to enrol himself in one of the battalions of volunteers. It was soon discovered that he had marked

talents for war, and the suffrages of his fellow-soldiers rapidly raised him to the rank of colonel, which he attained at the close of 1793, during which he had served with his regiment in the army of the Eastern Pyrenees. After the 9th Thermidor, however, he was deprived of his command, as well as Napoleon and Massena, in consequence of their connection with the younger Robespierre, and the extreme Jacobin party; and being without employment, he returned to Paris, where he formed an acquaintance with both these generals. Massena and he served together under Napoleon on occasion of the revolt of the sections on the 13th Vendemiaire; and the services they then rendered at once reinstated them in the favour of government. When Napoleon received the command of the army of Italy, Lannes solicited and received leave to accompany him, and he was immediately placed at the head of a regiment, which distinguished itself in the highest degree in the course of the campaign.¹

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¹ Vie de Lannes, Paris, 1810, p. 3, 67. Biog. Univ. xxix. 474. (Montebello.)

Lannes was one of the greatest generals which the French Revolution produced. "His talent," said Napoleon, "was equal to his bravery. He was at once the Roland of the army, and a giant in capacity. He had great experience in war, had been in fifty-four pitched battles, and three hundred combats. He was cool in the midst of fire, and possessed a clear penetrating eye, ready to take advantage of any opportunity which might present itself. Violent and hasty in his temper, sometimes even in my presence, he was yet ardently attached to me. As a general, he was greatly superior to either Moreau or Soult." In his private character, however, this great general never recovered the defects of his early education. He was ignorant on all matters excepting his profession, coarse in conversation, often irritable in temper, vehement in anger, and altogether destitute of the lighter graces which soften and adorn the military character.²

62.
His character.

² O'Meara, i. 239. Las. Cas. ii. 374. D'Abr. vi. 326.

After the battle of Dego, La Harpe's division was placed to keep the shattered remains of Beaulieu's forces in check, while the weight of the army was moved against the Sardinian troops. Augereau drove the Piedmontese from the heights of Monte Zemolo, and soon after the main body of the army arrived upon the same ridge. From thence the eye could discover the immense and fertile plains of

63.
Arrival of the Republicans on the heights of Monte Zemolo.

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Piedmont. The Po, the Tanaro, the Stura, and a multitude of smaller streams, were descried in the distance at the foot of the mountains, meandering in infant beauty; beyond them the blue plains of Italy bounded the horizon, while a glittering semicircle of snow and ice, of a prodigious elevation, seemed to inclose within its mighty walls the promised land. It was a sublime spectacle when the troops arrived on this elevated point, and the soldiers, exhausted with fatigue, and overwhelmed by the grandeur of the sight, paused and gazed on the plains beneath. Those gigantic barriers, apparently the limits of the world, which nature had rendered so formidable, and on which art had lavished its treasures, had fallen as if by enchantment. "Hannibal," said Napoleon, fixing his eyes on the mountains, "forced the Alps, but we have turned them." Soon after, the troops descended the ridge, passed the Tanaro, and found themselves in the Italian plains.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
147. Th.
viii. 233.

64.
19th April.
Actions of
Serrurier
with Colli.
Danger of
Napoleon.

Serrurier was now detached by the bridge of St Michael to turn the right of Colli, who occupied the intrenched camp of Cevo, while Massena passed the Tanaro to turn his left. The Piedmontese, who were about eight thousand strong, defended the camp in the first instance with success; but, finding their communications on the point of being lost, they retired in the night, and took a position behind the deep and rapid torrent of the Cursaglia. There they were assailed, on the following day, by Serrurier, who forced the bridge of St Michael: while Joubert, who had waded through the torrent further up, in vain endeavoured to induce his followers to pass, and was obliged, after incurring the greatest risks, to retire. Relieved now from all anxiety about his flank, Colli fell with all his forces on Serrurier, and, after a severe action, drove him back again over the bridge, with the loss of six hundred men. This check exposed Napoleon to imminent danger. The Sardinian general occupied a strong position at Mondovi in his front, while Beaulieu, with an army still formidable, was in his rear, and might easily resume offensive operations. A council of war was held in the night, at which it was unanimously resolved, notwithstanding the fatigue of the troops, to resume the attack on the following day. All the dispositions, accordingly, were made for a renewed assault on the bridge, with increased forces; but, on

arriving at the advanced posts at daybreak, they found them abandoned by the enemy, who had fought only in order to gain time for the evacuation of the magazines in his rear, and had retired in the night to Mondovi. He was overtaken, however, in his retreat, near that place, by the indefatigable victor, who had seized a strong position, where he hoped to arrest the enemy. The Republicans immediately advanced to the assault, and, though Serrurier was defeated in the centre by the brave Austrian grenadiers of Dichat, yet that courageous general having been struck dead by a cannon-ball at the moment when his troops, somewhat disordered by success, were assailed in flank by superior forces, the Piedmontese were thrown into confusion, and Serrurier, resuming the offensive, attacked and carried the redoubt of Bicoque, the principal defence of the position, and gained the victory. Colli retired to Cherasco, with the loss of two thousand men, eight cannon, and eleven standards.¹

Thither he was followed by Napoleon, who occupied that town, which, though fortified, and important from its position at the confluence of the Stura and the Tanaro, was not armed, and incapable of resistance; and by so doing, not only acquired a firm footing in the interior of Piedmont, but made himself master of extensive magazines. This important success speedily changed the situation of the French army. Having descended from the sterile and inhospitable summits of the Alps, they found themselves, though still among the mountains, in communication with the rich and fertile plains of Italy; provisions were obtained in abundance, and with the introduction of regularity in the supplies, the pillage and disorders consequent upon prior privations disappeared. The soldiers, animated with success, speedily recovered from their fatigues; the stragglers, and those left behind in the mountains, rejoined their colours; and the bands of conscripts from the depots in the interior eagerly pressed forward to share in the glories, and partake the spoils, of the Italian army. In a short time the Republicans, notwithstanding all their losses, were as strong as at the commencement of the campaign; while the Allies, besides having been driven from the ridge of the Alps, the barrier of Piedmont,² were weakened by the loss of above twelve

CHAP.
XX.

1796.

21st April.

1 Th. viii.
233, 234.
Nap. iii.
150. Jom.
viii. 88, 95.
Hard. iii.
310.

65.
Immense
advantages
gained by
the French
by these
operations.

² Jom. viii.
66. Nap.
iii. 150.

CHAP.
XX.

1796.

66.
Consternation of the Court of Turin. They resolve to submit to France.

thousand men and forty pieces of cannon. The effect of these successes was such, that the Allies every where retired from the field, and the French army in a few days appeared before the gates of Turin.

The court of Victor Amadeus was now in the utmost consternation, and opinions were violently divided as to the course which should be pursued. The ministers of Austria and England urged the King, who was by no means deficient in firmness, to imitate the glorious example of his ancestors, and abandon his capital. But as a preliminary to so decided a step, they insisted that the fortresses of Tortona, Alexandria, and Valence, should be put into the possession of the Austrians, in order to give Beaulieu a solid footing on the Po; and to this sacrifice in favour of a rival power, he could not be brought to submit. At length the Cardinal Costa persuaded him to throw himself into the arms of the French, and Colli was authorised to open negotiations. This was one of the numerous instances in the history of Napoleon, in which his audacity not only extricated him from the most perilous situations, but gave him the most splendid triumphs; for at this period, by his own admission, the French army was in very critical circumstances. He had neither heavy cannon nor a siege equipage to reduce Turin, Alexandria, or the other numerous fortresses of Piedmont, without the possession of which it would have been extremely hazardous to have penetrated further into the country: the Allied armies, united, were still superior to the French, and their cavalry, of such vital importance in the plains, had not at all suffered; while his own troops, confounded at their own achievements, and as yet unaccustomed to such rapid success, were beginning to hesitate as to the expedience of any further advance. "The King of Sardinia," says Napoleon, "had still a great number of fortresses left; and in spite of the victories which had been gained, the slightest check, one caprice of fortune, would have undone every thing."¹

¹ Nap. iii. 151, 152, 193. Hard. iii. 323, 326. Jom. viii. 96, 97.

67.
Armistice. Its conditions.

It was, therefore, with the most lively satisfaction that Napoleon received the advances of the Sardinian government; but he insisted that, as a preliminary to any armistice, the fortresses of Coni, Tortona, and Alexandria, should be put into his hands. The Piedmontese commis-

sioners were at first disposed to resist this demand; but Napoleon sternly replied—"It is for me to impose conditions—your ideas are absurd: listen to the laws which I impose upon you, in the name of the government of my country, and obey, or to-morrow my batteries are erected, and Turin is in flames." These words so intimidated the Piedmontese, that they returned in consternation to their capital, where every opposition speedily gave way. After some negotiation, the treaty was concluded, the principal conditions of which were, that the King of Sardinia should abandon the alliance, and send an ambassador to Paris to conclude a definite peace; that in the mean time Ceva, Coni, and Tortona, or, failing it, Alexandria, should be delivered up to the French army, with all the artillery and magazines they contained; that the victors should continue to occupy all the positions which at present were in their possession; that Valence should be instantly ceded to the Republicans in lieu of the Neapolitans; that the militia should be disbanded, and the regular troops dispersed in the fortified places, so as to give no umbrage to the French.¹

CHAP.
XX.

1796.

27th April.

¹ Nap. iii.
155. Hard.
iii. 328.
Jom. viii. 93.

The armistice was followed, a fortnight after, by a treaty of peace between the King of Sardinia and the French Republic. By it his Sardinian Majesty finally renounced the coalition; ceded to the Republic, Savoy, Nice, and the whole possessions of Piedmont to the westward of the highest ridge of the Alps, (extending from Mount St Bernard by Mount Genève to Roccabaroné near Genoa;) and granted a free passage through his dominions to all the troops of the French nation. The importance of this accommodation may be judged of by the letter of Napoleon to the Directory the day the armistice was signed—"Coni, Ceva, and Alexandria are in the hands of our army; if you do not ratify the convention, I will keep these fortresses, and march upon Turin. Meanwhile, I shall march to-morrow against Beaulieu, and drive him across the Po; I shall follow close at his heels, overrun all Lombardy, and in a month be in the Tyrol, join the army of the Rhine, and carry our united forces into Bavaria. That design is worthy of you, of the army, and of the destinies of France.² If you continue your confidence in

68.
Followed by
a treaty of
peace be-
tween
France and
Sardinia.
15th May.

² Corresp.
Secrète de
Nap. 28th
April. Jom.
viii. 102.

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XX.

1796.

69.

Its immense
importance
to Napo-
leon.

me, I shall answer for the results, and Italy is at your feet."

This treaty was of more service to the French general than many victories. It gave him a firm footing in Piedmont; artillery and stores for the siege of Turin, if the final conditions should not be agreed to by the Directory; general stores and magazines in abundance, and a direct communication with Genoa and France for the future supplies of the army. Napoleon, from the solid base of the Piedmontese fortresses, was enabled to turn his undivided attention to the destruction of the Austrians, and thus commence, with some security, that great career of conquest which he already meditated in the Imperial dominions. Nevertheless, a large proportion of his troops and officers openly condemned the conclusion of any treaty of peace with a monarchical government; and insisted that the opportunity should not have been suffered to escape, of establishing a revolutionary government in the frontier state of Italy. But Napoleon—whose head was too strong to be carried away by the fumes of democracy, and who already gave indications of that resolution to detach himself from the cause of revolution by which he was ever after so strongly distinguished—replied, that the first duty of the army was to secure a firm base for future operations; that it was on the Adige that the French standard must be established to protect Italy from the Imperialists; that it was impossible to advance thus far without being secured in their rear; that a revolutionary government in Piedmont would require constant assistance, scatter alarm through Italy, and prove a source of weakness rather than strength; whereas the Sardinian fortresses at once put the Republicans in possession of the keys of the Peninsula.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
157, 161.
Th. viii. 237.

70.

His triumphant proclamation to his soldiers. General intoxication at Paris.

At the same time, he despatched his aide-de-camp, Murat, with the standards taken, to Paris, and addressed to his soldiers one of those exaggerated but eloquent proclamations, which contributed as much as his victories, by captivating the minds of men, to his astonishing success. "Soldiers! you have gained in fifteen days six victories, taken one-and-twenty standards, fifty-five pieces of cannon, many strong places, and conquered the richest part of

Piedmont; you have made fifteen thousand prisoners, killed or wounded ten thousand men. Hitherto you have fought on sterile rocks, rendered illustrious, indeed, by your courage, but of no avail to your country; now you rival, by your services, the armies of the Rhine and the North. Destitute at first, you have supplied every thing. You have gained battles without cannons; passed rivers without bridges; made forced marches without shoes; bivouacked without bread! The phalanxes of the Republic—the soldiers of liberty—were alone capable of such sacrifices. But, soldiers, you have done nothing, while any thing remains to do. Neither Turin nor Milan is in your hands; the ashes of the conqueror of Tarquin are still trampled on by the assassins of Basseville! I am told that there are some among you whose courage is giving way; who would rather return to the summits of the Alps and the Appenines. No—I cannot believe it. The conquerors of Montenotte, of Millesimo, of Dego, of Mondovi, burn to carry still further the glories of the French name!" When these successive victories, these standards, these proclamations, arrived day after day at Paris, the joy of the people knew no bounds. The first day the gates of the Alps were opened; the next, the Austrians were separated from the Piedmontese; the third, the Sardinian army was destroyed, and the fortresses surrendered. The rapidity of the success, the number of the prisoners, exceeded all that had yet been witnessed. Every one asked, who was this young conqueror whose fame had burst forth so suddenly, and whose proclamations breathed the spirit of ancient glory? Three times the Councils decreed that the army of Italy had deserved well of their country, and appointed a *fête* to Victory, in honour of the commencement of the campaign.¹

Having secured his rear by this advantageous treaty, Napoleon lost no time in pursuing the discomfited remains of Beaulieu's army, which had retired behind the Po, in the hope of covering the Milanese territory. The forces of the Austrians were plainly now unequal to the struggle; a *coup-de-main*, which Beaulieu attempted on the fortresses of Alexandria, Tortona, and Valence, failed, and they were immediately after surrendered to the Republicans; while the army of Napoleon was about to be united to the corps

CHAP.
XX.

1796.

¹ Th. viii.
240, 241.
Hard. iii.
338.

71.
Designs of
Napoleon.

2d May.

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XX.

1796.

¹ Jom. viii.
110, 112.
Th. viii. 253.
Hard. iii.
337. Nap.
iii. 164, 165.

of Kellerman, and the possession of the Col di Tende, the principal passage in that quarter from France into Italy, by the conclusion of the armistice, now rendered disposable a reinforcement of above twenty thousand men. Napoleon, on his side, indulged the most brilliant anticipations; and confidently announced to the Directory that he would cross the Po, expel the Austrians from the Milanese territory, traverse the mountains of the Tyrol, unite with the army of the Rhine, and carry the war, by the valley of the Danube, into the heart of the Imperial dominions.¹*

72.
Crosses the
Po, and pro-
ceeds against
Beaulieu.

By inserting a clause in the treaty with the King of Sardinia, that the French army was to be at liberty to cross the Po at Valence, he completely deceived the Austrians as to the place where the passage was to be effected. The whole attention of Beaulieu having been drawn to that point, the Republican forces were rapidly moved to Placentia, and began to cross the river in boats at the latter place. Lannes was the first who effected the passage, and the other columns soon passed with such rapidity that a firm footing was obtained on the opposite bank, and two days afterwards Napoleon arrived with the bulk of his forces and established a bridge. By this skilful march, not only the Po was passed, but the Ticino turned, as Placentia is below its junction with the former river; so that one great obstacle to the conquest of Lombardy was already removed.²

¹ Nap. iii.
65. Th.
iii. 254, 257.
Jom. viii
16.

73.
Action at
Fombio.

Beaulieu, however, was now considerably reinforced, and his forces amounted to thirty-six battalions, and forty-four squadrons, besides 120 pieces of cannon, in all nearly forty thousand men. He was at Pavia, busily engaged in erecting fortifications, when he received intelligence of the passage at Placentia. He immediately moved forward his advanced guard, consisting of three thousand infantry, and two thousand horse, under General Liptay, to Fombio, a

* Napoleon wrote to the Directory at this period:—"The King of Sardinia has surrendered at discretion, given up three of his strongest fortresses, and the half of his dominions. If you do not choose to accept his submission, but resolve to dethrone him, you must amuse him for a few weeks, and give me warning: I will get possession of Valence, and march upon Turin. On the other hand, I shall impose a contribution of some millions on the Duke of Parma, detach twelve thousand men to Rome, as soon as I have beaten Beaulieu and driven him across the Adige, and then I am assured that you will conclude peace with the King of Sardinia, and strengthen me by the army of Kellerman. As to Genoa, by all means oblige it to pay fifteen millions."—*Secret Despatch to Directory, 29th April 1796. Corres. Secrète de Napoleon*, i. 103.

small town a short distance from the Republican posts. Napoleon, who feared that he might be strengthened in this position, and was well aware of the danger of fighting a general battle with a great river in his rear, lost no time in advancing his forces to dislodge him. D'Allemagne, at the head of the grenadiers, attacked on the right; Lanusse by the *chaussée* on the centre; and Lannes on the left. After a vigorous resistance, the Austrians were expelled from the town, with the loss of above a thousand men. Liptay fell back to Pizzighitone. Meanwhile, Beaulieu was advancing with the bulk of his forces; and the leading division of his army surprised General La Harpe in the night, who was killed bravely fighting at the head of his division, but not before the Austrians had been compelled to retire.¹

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XX.

1796.

¹ Th. viii.
258. Nap.
iii. 166.
Jom. viii.
117.

The French troops having now entered upon the states of Parma, it was of importance to establish matters on a pacific footing in their rear before pressing forward to Milan. The Grand Duke had no military resources whatever; the victor, therefore, resolved to grant him terms, upon the surrender of what he had to give. He was obliged to pay 2,000,000 of francs in silver, and to furnish sixteen hundred artillery horses, of which the army stood much in need, besides great supplies of corn and provisions. But on this occasion Napoleon commenced another species of military contribution, which he has himself confessed was unparalleled in modern warfare, that of exacting from the vanquished the surrender of their most precious works of art. Parma was compelled to give up twenty of its principal paintings, among which was the celebrated St Jerome by Correggio. The Duke offered a million of francs as a ransom for that inestimable work of art, which many of his officers urged the French general to accept, as of much more service to the army than the painting; but Napoleon, whose mind was fixed on greater things, replied—"The million which he offers us would soon be spent; but the possession of such a *chef-d'œuvre* at Paris will adorn that capital for ages, and give birth to similar exertions of genius."²

74.
Capitulation
of the Grand
Duke of
Parma.

² Nap. iii.
169. Th.
viii. 255.

Thus commenced the system of seizing the great works of art in the conquered states, which the French generals afterwards carried to such a height, and which finally pro-

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XX.

1796.

75.

Commence-
ment of Na-
poleon's
system of
levying con-
tributions
on the works
of art.

duced the noble gallery of the Louvre. The French have since had good reason to congratulate themselves that the Allies did not follow their bad example; and that, on occasion of the second capture of Paris, their victors had the generosity to content themselves with enforcing restitution of the abstracted spoils, without, like them, compelling the surrender of those that had been legitimately acquired. Certainly it is impossible to condemn too strongly a use of the powers of conquest, which extends the ravages of war into the peaceful domain of the fine arts; which transplants the monuments of genius from the regions where they have arisen, and where their value is appreciated, to those where they are exotics, and their merit is probably little understood; which renders them, instead of being the proud legacy of genius to its country, the mere trophy of a victor's glory; which exposes them to be tossed about by the tide of conquest, and subjected to irreparable injury in following the fleeting career of success; and converts works, destined to elevate and captivate the human race, into the subject of angry contention, and the badge of temporary subjugation.

76.
Terrible
passage of
the Bridge
of Lodi.
May 8.

On the 8th, Napoleon marched towards Milan; but, before arriving at that city, he required to cross the Adda. The wooden bridge of LODI over that river was held by a strong rearguard, consisting of twelve thousand Austrian infantry and four thousand horse; while the remainder of their forces had retired to Cassano, and the neighbourhood of Milan. By a rapid advance, he hoped to cut off the bulk of their troops from the hereditary states, and make them prisoners; but as there was not a moment to be lost in achieving the movements requisite to attain this object, he resolved to force the bridge, and thus get into their rear. He himself arrived at Lodi, at the head of the grenadiers of D'Allemagne; upon which, the Austrians withdrew from the town, and crossed the river; drawing up their infantry, with twenty pieces of cannon, at the further extremity of the bridge, to defend the passage. Napoleon immediately directed Beaumont, with all the cavalry of the army, to pass at a ford half a league further up, while he himself directed all the artillery which had arrived against the Austrian battery, and formed six thousand grenadiers in close column, under cover of the

houses at his own end of the bridge. No sooner did he perceive that the discharge of the Austrian artillery was beginning to slacken, from the effect of the French fire, and that the passage of the cavalry on their flank had commenced, than, addressing a few animating words to his soldiers, he gave the signal to advance. The grenadiers pushed on in double quick time through a cloud of smoke over the long and narrow defile of the bridge. The terrible storm of grape-shot for a moment arrested their progress; the front ranks were entirely swept away: but those in rear, finding themselves supported by a cloud of tirailleurs, who waded the stream below the arches, and led with heroic courage by their general, soon recovered, and, rushing forward with resistless fury, carried the Austrian guns, and drove back their infantry. Had the French cavalry been ready to profit by the confusion, the whole corps of the Imperialists would have been destroyed; but, as it had not yet come up, their numerous squadrons protected the retreat of the infantry, which retired with the loss of two thousand men, and twenty pieces of cannon. The loss of the victors was at least as great. The object of this bold measure was indeed lost, for the Austrians, whom it had been intended to cut off, had meanwhile gained the *chaussée* of Brescia, and made good their retreat: but it contributed greatly to exalt the character and elevate the courage of the Republican troops, by inspiring them with the belief that nothing could resist them: and it made a deep impression on the mind of Napoleon, who ever after styled it the "terrible passage of the bridge of Lodi."¹*

The victory at Lodi had an extraordinary effect on the French army. After each success, the old soldiers, who had at first been somewhat distrustful of their young commander, assembled, and gave him a new step of promotion. He was made a corporal at Lodi; and the surname of "Le Petit Caporal," thence acquired, was long remembered in the army. When, in 1815, he was met by the battalion sent against him from the fortress of Grenoble, the soldiers, the moment they saw him, exclaimed, "Long live our little corporal! we will never

CHAP.

XX.

1796.

10th May.

1 Jom. viii.
123, 126.
Scott, iii.
131. Bot.
iii. 351.
Nap. iii.
172-174.
Th. viii. 260,
261. Per-
sonal obser-
vation.

77.

Great effect
of this vic-
tory.

* The bridge of Lodi exactly resembles the wooden bridge over the Clyde at Glasgow, both in form, materials, and length — *Personal observation.*

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XX.

1796.

¹ Las Cas.
162, 182.

78.
Napoleon
enters
Milan.

² Th. viii.
263. Nap.
iii. 176.
Jom. viii.
127.

79.
His procla-
mation there
to his
troops.

oppose him." Nor did this fearful passage produce a less powerful impression on the mind of the general. "The 13th Vendemiaire, and the victory of Montenotte," said Napoleon, "did not induce me to believe myself a superior character. It was after the passage of Lodi that the idea shot across my mind, that I might become a decisive actor on the political theatre. Then arose, for the first time, the spark of great ambition."¹

After this disaster, Beaulieu retired behind the Mincio, leaving Milan to its fate; and Pizzighitone, with its garrison of five hundred men, capitulated. Serrurier was placed at Cremona, from whence he observed the garrison of Mantua, while Augereau pushed on from Pizzighitone to Pavia. On the 15th, Napoleon made his triumphal entry into Milan at the head of his troops, with all the pomp of war, to the sound of military music, amidst the acclamations of an immense concourse of spectators, and through the lines of the national guard, dressed in three colours, in honour of the triumph of the tricolor flag.²

On this occasion the conqueror addressed to his soldiers another of those heart-stirring proclamations which so powerfully contributed to electrify the ardent imagination of the Italians, and added so much to the influence of his victories.—"Soldiers! you have descended like a torrent from the summit of the Appenines; you have overwhelmed and dispersed every thing which opposed your progress. Piedmont, delivered from the tyranny of Austria, has felt itself at liberty to indulge its natural inclination for peace, and for a French alliance: Milan is in your hands; and the Republican standards wave over the whole of Lombardy. The Dukes of Parma and Modena owe their existence only to your generosity. The army which menaced you with so much pride, can now no longer find a barrier to protect itself against your arms: the Po, the Ticino, the Adda, have not been able to stop you a single day; these boasted bulwarks of Italy have proved as nugatory as the Alps. Such a career of success has carried joy into the bosom of your country: *fêtes* in honour of your victories have been ordered by the National Representatives in all the communes of the Republic; there, your parents, your wives, your sisters, your lovers, rejoice at your success, and glory in their connexion

with you. Yes, soldiers! you have indeed done much; but much still remains to be done. Shall posterity say that we knew how to conquer, but not how to improve victory? Shall we find a Capua in Lombardy? The hour of vengeance has struck, but the people of all nations may rest in peace; we are the friends of every people, and especially of the descendants of Brutus, Scipio, and the other great men whom we have taken for examples. To restore the Capitol; to replace there the statues of the heroes who have rendered it immortal; to rouse the Romans from centuries of slavery—such will be the fruit of our victories: they will form an era in history; to you will belong the glory of having changed the face of the most beautiful part of Europe. The French people, free within and dreaded without, will give to Europe a glorious peace, which will indemnify her for all the sacrifices she has made for the last six years. Then you will return to your homes, and your fellow-citizens will say of each of you in passing—‘He was a soldier in the army of Italy!’”¹

Great was the enthusiasm, unbounded the joy, which these unparalleled successes and eloquent words excited among all that ardent and generous part of the Italian people, who panted for civil liberty and national independence. To them Napoleon appeared as the destined regenerator of Italy, the hero who was to achieve their liberation from Transalpine oppression, and bring back the glorious days of Roman virtue. His burning words, his splendid actions, the ancient cast of his thoughts, diffused a universal enchantment. Even the coolest heads began to turn at the brilliant career thus begun, by a general not yet six-and-twenty years of age, and the boundless anticipations of future triumph, of which he spoke with prophetic certainty. From every part of Italy the young and the ardent flocked to Milan; balls and festivities gave token of the universal joy; every word and look of the conqueror was watched, the patriots compared him to Scipio and Hannibal, and the ladies on the popular side knew no bounds to their adulation.²

But this effusion was of short duration, and Italy was soon destined to experience the bitter fate and cruel degradation of every people who look for their deliverance to foreign assistance. In the midst of the general joy, a

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XX.

1796.

¹ Moniteur,
May 22.
Nap. iii 178.

80.
Enthusiasm
excited by
the suc-
cesses
among the
Democratic
party in
Italy.

² Bot.
356-358.
Th. viii. 265.

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XX.

1796.

81.

Cruel dis-
pelling of
the illusion
by the
French
contribu-
tions.

17th May

1 Th. viii.
265. Jom.
viii. 180.
Nap. iii. 183.82.
War made
to support
war.

contribution of twenty millions of francs, or £800,000 sterling, struck Milan with astonishment, and wounded the Italians in their tenderest part—their domestic and economical arrangements. So enormous a contribution upon a single city seemed scarcely possible to be realised; but the sword of the victor offered no alternative. Great requisitions were at the same time made of horses for the artillery and cavalry in all the Milanese territory; and provisions were amassed on all sides at the expense of the inhabitants, for which they received nothing, or Republican paper of no value. Nor did the Duke of Modena escape more easily. He was compelled to purchase peace by a contribution of ten millions of francs in money, or stores for the army, and to submit to the exaction of twenty paintings from his gallery for the Republican Museum. Liberated Italy was treated with more severity than is generally the lot of conquered states.¹

Thus commenced the system of “making war support war,” which contributed so much to the early success of the Republican arms, which compensated for all the penury and exhaustion of the Republican territory, which raised to the clouds the glory of the empire, and brought about with certainty its ultimate destruction. France, abounding with men, but destitute of money—incapable of supporting war by its own resources, from the entire stoppage of domestic industry, but teeming with a restless and indigent population—found in this system the means of advancement and opulence. While the other armies of the Republic were suffering under the horrors of penury, and could hardly find food for their support, or clothes for their covering, the army of Italy was rolling in opulence, and the spoils of vanquished states gave them every enjoyment of life. From that time there was no want of soldiers to follow the career of the conqueror; the Alps were covered with files of troops pressing forward to the theatre of glory, and all the chasms occasioned by the relentless system of war which he followed, were filled up by the multitudes whom the illusion of victory brought to his standard. But the Republican soldiers were far from anticipating the terrible reverses to which this system of spoliation was ultimately to lead, or that France was destined to groan under exactions as severe as those she

now so liberally inflicted upon others. Clothed, fed, and lodged at the expense of the Milanese, the soldiers pursued with thoughtless eagerness the career of glory which had opened before them. The artillery, the cavalry, were soon in the finest condition, and hospitals established for fifteen thousand sick in the different towns in the conquered territory; for to that immense number had the rapidity of the marches, and the multiplicity of the combats, swelled the sick list. Having amply provided for his own army, Napoleon dispatched several millions by the route of Genoa for the service of the Directory, and one million over the Alps to Moreau, to relieve the pressing wants of the army of the Upper Rhine.¹

CHAP.
XX.

1796.

¹ Th. viii.
137, 265,
266. Nap.
Conf.
i. 133.

These great successes already began to inspire the French Government with jealousy of their lieutenant, and they in consequence transmitted an order by which Kellerman, with twenty thousand men, was to command on the left bank of the Po, and cover the siege of Mantua, while Napoleon, with the remainder of the forces, was to march upon Rome and Naples. But he was both too proud to submit to any division of his authority, and too sagacious not to see that, by thus separating the forces, and leaving only a small army in the north of Italy, the Austrians would speedily regain their lost ground, drive their inconsiderable opponents over the Alps, and cut off, without the possibility of escape, the corps in the south of the Peninsula. He, therefore, at once resigned his command, accompanying it with the observation, that one bad general is better than two good ones. The Directory, however, unable to dispense with the services of their youthful officer, immediately reinstated him, and abandoned their project, which was indeed in itself so absurd that it would have thrown great doubts on the military capacity of Carnot, the minister at war, if it had not in reality been suggested by the wish to extinguish the rising ambition of Napoleon.²*

^{83.}
The Directory, jealous of his power, orders Napoleon to march to Rome. He refuses.

² Th. viii.
269. Nap.
iii. 184.
Jom. viii.
133.

* Napoleon on this occasion wrote to Carnot:—"Kellerman could command the army as well as I; for no one is more convinced than I am of the courage and fidelity of the soldiers; but to unite us together would ruin every thing. I will not serve with a man who considers himself the first general in Europe; and it is better to have one bad general than two good ones. War is, like government, decided in a great degree by tact." To the Directory he observed,—"It is in the highest degree impolitic to divide in two the army of Italy, and not less adverse to the interests of

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84.
Alarming
insurrection
at Pavia.

In less than ten days after the occupation of Milan, national guards in the Republican interest were organised in the whole of Lombardy; revolutionary authorities were every where established, and the country rendered subservient to the military power of France. The garrison of two thousand men which Beaulieu had left in the citadel of Milan, was closely invested, and the headquarters were moved to Lodi. But an event here occurred which threatened great danger to the French army, and was only prevented from proving calamitous by the decision and severity of its chief. Opinions were much divided in Italy, as in all states undergoing the crisis of a revolution, on the changes which were going forward. The lower classes in the towns had been moved by the equality which the French every where proclaimed; but the peasantry in the country, less liable to the contagion of new principles, and more under the influence of the nobility and priests, were still firmly attached to the ancient *régime*, with which the Austrian authority was now identified. When men's minds were in this divided state, the prodigious contribution levied upon Milan, and the vast requisitions of provisions and horses which had been made for the use of the army, over the whole country

the Republic, to place at its head two different generals. The expedition to Leghorn, Rome, and Naples, is a very inconsiderable matter, and should be made by divisions in echelon, ready, at a moment's warning, to wheel about and face the Austrians on the Adige. To perform it with success, both armies must be under the command of one general. I have hitherto conducted the campaign without consulting any one: the results would have been very different if I had been obliged to reconcile my views with those of another. If you impose upon me vexations of every description; if I must refer all my steps to the commissaries of government; if they are authorised to change my movements, to send away my troops, expect no further success. If you weaken your resources by dividing your forces; if you disturb in Italy the unity of military thought, I say it with grief, you will lose the fairest opportunity that ever occurred of giving laws to that fine peninsula. In the position of the affairs of the Republic, it is indispensable that you possess a general who enjoys your confidence; if I do not do so, I shall not complain, and shall do my utmost to manifest my zeal in the service which you intrust to me. Every one has his own method of carrying on war; Kellerman has more experience, and may do it better than I; but together we would do nothing but mischief. Your resolution on this matter is of more importance than the fifteen thousand men whom the Emperor has just sent to Beaulieu."¹ But Napoleon did not intrust this important matter merely to these arguments, strong as they were. Murat, who was still at Paris, received instructions to inform Barras, that a million of francs were deposited at Geneva for his private use; and the influence of Josephine was employed both with him and Carnot to prevent the threatened division, and the result was that it was abandoned. "The Directory," said Carnot, "has maturely considered your arguments; and the confidence which they have in your talents and republican zeal, have decided the matter in your favour. Kellerman will remain at Chamberry, and you may adjourn the expedition to Rome as long as you please."—HARDENBERG, iii. 49, 351.

¹ Corresp.
Secrete Nap.
i. 160, 162.

districts, inflamed the rural population to the highest degree. The people of Lombardy did not consider themselves as conquered, nor expect to be treated as such: they had welcomed the French as deliverers, and now they found a severer yoke imposed upon them than that from which they had just escaped. Roused to indignation by such treatment, a general insurrection was rapidly organised over the whole of that beautiful district. An attack, in concert with a sortie from the garrison of the castle, was made on Milan; and though it failed, the insurgents were more successful at Pavia, where the people rose against the garrison, forced it to capitulate, admitted eight thousand armed peasants within the walls, and closed their gates against the French troops.¹

The danger was imminent; the tocsin sounded in all the parishes; the least retrograde movement would have augmented the evil, and compelled the retreat of the army, whose advanced posts were already on the Oglio. In these circumstances, prudence counselled temerity; and Napoleon advanced in person to crush the insurgents. Their vanguard, posted at Brescia, was routed by Lannes; the village burnt, and a hundred of the peasants killed; but this severe example having failed in producing intimidation, he marched himself next day to the walls of Pavia, with six pieces of light artillery. The grenadiers rushed forward to the gates, which they broke open with hatchets: while the artillery cleared the ramparts, the victorious troops broke into the town, which the peasants precipitately abandoned to its fate. Napoleon, wishing to terrify the insurgents, ordered the magistrates and leaders of the revolt to be shot, and the city to be delivered up to plunder, while the unhappy peasants, pursued into the plain by the French dragoons, were cut down in great numbers. The pillage continued the whole day, and that opulent and flourishing town underwent all the horrors of war; but the terrible example crushed the insurrection over the whole of Lombardy, where tranquillity was speedily re-established, and hostages were taken from the principal families and dispatched into France.²

In this act was displayed another feature of Napoleon's character, who, without being unnecessarily cruel, never hesitated to adopt the most sanguinary measures when requisite for his own purposes. Pillage and rapine, in-

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XX.

W96.

¹ Th. viii.
272, 273.
Nap. iii. 191.
195. Jom.
viii. 136.

86.
Storm and
sack of that
city by the
French
troops.

² Th. viii.
275. Nap.
iii. 194.
Jom. viii.
138. Bot.
i. 390, 394.

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1796.

86.

Moral retri-
bution to
which this
system ulti-
mately led.

deed, invariably follow the capture of a town carried by assault, and it is impossible to prevent it: but Napoleon in this instance authorised it by a general order, and shot the leading persons of the city in cold blood. It is in vain to appeal to the usages of war for a vindication of such cruelty; the inhabitants of Pavia were not subjects of France who were not entitled to resist its authority; they were Austrian citizens, entitled to defend their country from invasion. Nor can it be said they were not soldiers, and that simple citizens have no right to interfere with the contests of hostile armies; the words of Napoleon himself furnish his own condemnation:—"It is the first duty," said the Emperor, in his proclamation to the peasantry of France, on March 5, 1814, "of every citizen to take up arms in defence of his country. Let the peasantry every where organise themselves in bands, with such weapons as they can find; let them fall upon the flanks and rear of the invaders; and let a consuming fire envelope the presumptuous host which has dared to violate the territory of the great nation." It will appear in the sequel to what a terrible retribution on France and Napoleon this system ultimately led.¹

¹ Proclama-
tion, March
5, 1814.
Goldsmith's
Recueil, vi.
645. *Infra*.

87.

Napoleon
enters
Brescia and
the Vene-
tian terri-
tory.
28th May.

Having by this severity stifled the spirit of insurrection in his rear, Napoleon continued his march, and on the 28th entered the great city of Brescia, situated on the neutral territory of Venice. Meanwhile, Beaulieu experienced the usual fate of a retiring army, that of being weakened by the detachments necessary to garrison the fortified places which it leaves uncovered in its retreat. He threw twenty battalions of his best troops into Mantua, and took up a defensive position along the line of the Mincio. There he was assailed on the following day by Napoleon, who, after forcing a bridge in front of his position, attacked his rear-guard at Vallegio with all his cavalry, and made prisoners, in spite of the bravest efforts of the Austrian horse, twelve hundred men, and took five pieces of cannon.²

29th May.

² Nap. iii.
202. *Jom*.
viii. 139, 142.

88.

Debates in
the Venetian
Senate on
what should
be done.

When the French army entered the Venetian territory, and it had become evident that the flames of war were approaching its capital, it was warmly discussed in the Venetian Senate what course the Republic should pursue in the perilous circumstances that had occurred. Peschiera had been occupied by the Austrians, but, being abandoned by them, was instantly seized by the French, who insisted

that, though a Venetian fortress, yet, having been taken possession of by one of the belligerent powers, it had now become the fair conquest of the other; and, at the same time, Napoleon threatened the Republic with all the vengeance of France, if the Count de Lille, afterwards Louis XVIII., who had resided for some years at Verona, was not immediately compelled to leave their territories. The Republican forces, under Massena, were advancing towards Verona, and it was necessary to take a decided course. On the one hand it was urged, that France had now proclaimed principles subversive of all regular governments, and in an especial manner inimical to the aristocracy of Venice; that certain ruin, either from foreign violence or domestic revolution, was to be expected from their success; that the haughty tone even now assumed by the conqueror, already showed that he looked upon all the continental possessions of the Republic as his own, and was only waiting for an opportunity to seize them for the French nation; and, therefore, that the sole course left, was to throw themselves into the arms of Austria, the natural ally of all regular governments. On the other, it was contended that they must beware lest they mistook a temporary irruption of the Republicans for a permanent settlement; that Italy had in every age been the tomb of the French armies; that the forces of the present invader, how successful soever they had hitherto been, were unequal to a permanent occupation of the Peninsula, and would in the end yield to the persevering efforts of the Germans; that Austria, therefore, the natural enemy of Venice, and the power which coveted, would in the end attempt to seize, its territorial possessions; that their forces were now expelled from Lombardy, and could not resume the offensive for two months, a period which would suffice to the French general to destroy the Republic; that interest, therefore, equally with prudence, prescribed that they should attach themselves to the cause of France; obtain thereby a barrier against the ambition of their powerful neighbour, and receive in recompense for their services part of the Italian dominions of the Austrian empire. That in so doing, they must, it is true, to a certain degree modify their form of government; but that was no more than the spirit of the age required, and was absolutely

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¹ Bot. i. 403,
405, 408, 409.
Th. viii. 276,
279.

indispensable to secure the preservation of their continental possessions. A third party, few in numbers but resolute in purpose, contended, that the only safe course was that of an armed neutrality; that the forces of the Republic should be instantly raised to fifty thousand men, and either of the belligerent powers which should violate their territory, be threatened with the whole vengeance of the Republic.¹

89.
They merely
deprecate
the hostility
of France.

Had the Venetians possessed the firmness of the Roman Senate, they would have adopted the first course; had they been inspired by the spirit of the Athenian democracy, they would have followed the second; had they been animated by the courage of the Swiss confederacy, they might have taken the third. In any case the Republic would probably have been saved; for it is impossible to consider the long and equal struggle which ensued round Mantua, between France and Austria, without being convinced that a considerable body, even of Italian troops, might then have cast the balance. The Venetian Government possessed a country inhabited by three millions of souls; the capital was beyond the reach of attack; their army could easily be raised to fifty thousand men; thirteen regiments of Slavonians in their service were good troops; their fleet ruled the Adriatic. But Venice was worn out and corrupted; its nobles, drowned in pleasure, were destitute of energy; its peasantry, inured to peace, were unequal to war; its defence, trusted merely to mercenary troops, rested on a tottering foundation. They adopted in consequence the most timid course, which, in presence of danger, is generally the most perilous. They made no warlike preparations; but merely sent commissioners to the French general to deprecate his hostility, and endeavour to secure his good-will. The consequence was, what might have been anticipated from conduct so unworthy of the ancient fame of Venice: the commissioners were disregarded; the war was carried on in the Venetian territories, and at its close the Republic was swept from the book of nations.²

² Bot. i. 408,
413. Nap.
iii. 204, 205.
Th. viii. 278,
280. Hard.
iii. 357.

In adopting this course, Napoleon exceeded the instructions of his government; and, indeed, on him alone appears to rest the atrocious perfidy and dissimulation exercised in the sequel towards that Republic. The direc-

tions of the Directory were as follows :—" Venice should be treated as a *neutral*, but not a friendly power ; it has done nothing to merit the latter character." But to the Venetian commissioners, Napoleon from the first used the most insulting and rigorous language. " Venice," said he, " by daring to give an asylum to the Count de Lille, a pretender to the throne of France, has declared war against the Republic. I know not why I should not reduce Verona to ashes—a town which had the presumption to esteem itself the capital of France." He declared to them that he would carry that threat into execution that very night, if an immediate surrender did not take place. The perfidy of his views against Venice, even at this early period, was fully evinced in his secret despatch to the Directory on 7th June. " If your object," said he, " is to extract five or six millions out of Venice, I have secured for you a pretence for a rupture. You may demand it as an indemnity for the combat of Borghetto, which I was obliged to sustain to take Peschiera. If you have more *decided views, we must take care not to let that subject of quarrel drop* ; tell me what you wish, and be assured I will seize the most fitting opportunity of carrying it into execution, according to circumstances, for we must take care not to have all the world on our hands at once." The truth of the affair of Peschiera is, that the Venetians were cruelly deceived by the Austrians, who demanded a passage for fifty men, and then seized the town.

Massena entered the magnificent city of Verona, the frontier city of the Venetian dominions, situated on the Adige, and a military position of the highest importance for future operations, in the beginning of June. Its position at the entrance of the great valley of the Adige, and on the high road from the Tyrol into Lombardy, rendered it the advanced post of the French army, in covering the siege of Mantua. He occupied, at the same time, Porto Legnago, a fortified town on the Adige, which, along with Verona, strengthened that stream, whose short and rapid course from the Alps to the Po formed the best military frontier of Italy. There Napoleon received the commissioners of Venice, who vainly came to deprecate the victor's wrath, and induce him to retire from the territories of the Republic. With such terror did his menaces

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1796.

90.
Perfidy of
Napoleon
towards the
Venetian
Commis-
sioners.

1 Corresp.
Secrète de
Nap. 7th
May, i. 232.
Hard. iii.
361.

91.
Massena
enters Ve-
rona, and
Napoleon is
established
on the
Adige.

June 3.

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1796.

June 4.

¹ Th. viii.

288, 289.

Hard. iii.

364. Nap.

iii. 205.

92.
Description
and blockade
of Mantua.

14th June.

inspire them, that the Venetian government concluded a treaty, by which they agreed to furnish supplies of every sort for the army, and secretly pay for them; and the commissioners, overawed by the commanding air and stern menaces of Napoleon, wrote to the Senate—"This young man will one day have an important influence on the destinies of his country."¹

The French general was now firmly established on the line of the Adige, the possession of which he always deemed of so much importance; and to the neglect of which he ascribed all the disasters of the succeeding campaigns of the French in Italy. Nothing remained but to make himself master of Mantua; and the immense efforts made by both parties to gain or keep possession of that place, prove the vast importance of fortresses in modern war. Placed in the middle of unhealthy marshes, which are traversed only by five *chaussées*, strong in its situation, as well as the fortifications which surround it, this town is truly the bulwark of Austria and Italy; without the possession of which the conquest of Lombardy must be deemed insecure, and that of the Hereditary States cannot be attempted. The entrances of two only of the *chaussées*, which approached it, were defended by fortifications at that time; so that by placing troops at these points, and drawing a cordon round the others, it was an easy matter to blockade the place, even with an inferior force. Serrurier sat down before this fortress, in the middle of June, with ten thousand men; and with this inconsiderable force, skilfully disposed at the entrance of the highways which crossed the lake, and round its shores, he contrived to keep in check a garrison of fourteen thousand soldiers, of whom, it is true, more than a third encumbered the hospitals of the place. As the siege of this important fortress required a considerable time, Napoleon had leisure to deliberate concerning the ulterior measures which he should pursue. An army of forty-five thousand men, which had so rapidly overrun the north of Italy, could not venture to penetrate into the Tyrol and Germany, the mountains of which were occupied by Beaulieu's forces, aided by a warlike peasantry, and at the same time carry on the blockade of Mantua, for which at least fifteen thousand men would be required. Moreover, the southern powers of Italy were

not yet subdued ; and, though little formidable in a military point of view, they might prove highly dangerous to the blockading force, if the bulk of the Republican troops were engaged in the defiles of the Tyrol, while the French armies on the Rhine were not yet in a condition to give them any assistance. Influenced by these considerations, Napoleon resolved to take advantage of the pause in military operations which the blockade of Mantua and retreat of Beaulieu afforded, to clear the enemies in his rear, and establish the French influence to the south of the Appenines.¹

The King of Naples, alarmed at the retreat of the German troops, and fearful of having the whole forces of the Republic upon his own hands, upon the first appearance of their advance to the south, solicited an armistice, which the French commander readily granted, and which was followed by the secession of the Neapolitan cavalry, two thousand four hundred strong, from the Imperial army. Encouraged by this defection, Napoleon resolved instantly to proceed against the Ecclesiastical and Tuscan states, in order to extinguish the hostility which was daily becoming more inveterate, to the south of the Appenines. In truth, the excitement was extreme in all the cities of Lombardy ; and every hour rendered more marked the separation between the aristocratic and democratic parties. The ardent spirits in Milan, Bologna, Brescia, Parma, and all the great towns of that fertile district, were in full revolutionary action, and a large proportion of their citizens seemed resolved to throw off the patrician influence under which they had so long continued, and establish republics on the model of the great Transalpine democracy. Wakened by these appearances to a sense of the danger which threatened them, the aristocratic party were every where strengthening themselves : the nobles in the Genoese fiefs were collecting forces ; the English had made themselves masters of Leghorn ; and the Roman pontiff was threatening to put forth his feeble strength. Napoleon knew that Wurmser, who had been detached from the army of the Upper Rhine with thirty thousand men, to restore affairs in Italy,² could not be at Verona before the middle of July, and before then there appeared time

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1 Nap. iii.
158, 209.
Jom. viii.
146. Th.
viii. 290.
Personal
observation.

93.
Napoleon
resolves to
proceed
against Flo-
rence and
Rome before
the Austrian
succours
arrive.
5th June.

2 Nap. iii.
213. Bot. i.
414, 420.
Th. viii. 293,
294.

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1796.

94. •
Castle of
Milan taken.
Genoese fleets
subdued.
Enters Mo-
dena and
Bologna.
June 9.

to subdue the states of central Italy, and secure the rear of his army.

Having left fifteen thousand men before Mantua, and twenty thousand on the Adige, to cover its blockade, the French general set out himself, with the division of Augereau, to cross the Appenines. He returned, in the first instance, to Milan, opened the trenches before its castle, and pressed the siege so as to compel its surrender, which took place shortly after. From thence he proceeded against the Genoese fiefs. Lannes, with twelve hundred men, stormed Arquata, the chief seat of hostilities; burned the village; shot the principal inhabitants; and by these severe measures so intimidated the senate of Genoa, that they implicitly submitted to the conqueror, sent off the Austrian minister, and agreed to the occupation of all the military posts in their territory by the French troops. From thence Napoleon moved towards the Appenines, entered Modena, where he was received with every demonstration of joy; and, on the road to Bologna, made himself master of the fort of Urbino, with sixty pieces of heavy artillery, which proved a most seasonable supply for the siege of Mantua. His appearance at Bologna, which has always been distinguished beyond any other city in Italy by liberal opinions, was the signal for universal intoxication. The people at once revolted against the Papal authority; while Napoleon encouraged the propagation of every principle which was calculated to dismember the Ecclesiastical territories. The Italian troops were pursued to Ferrara, which the Republicans entered without opposition, and made themselves masters of its arsenal, containing 114 pieces of artillery; while General Vaubois crossed the Appenines, and, avoiding Florence, directed his steps towards Rome.

June 19.

1 Jom. viii.
151. 152.
Rot. i. 416.
Th. viii. 298,
299. Nap.
iii. 214.

95.
Submission
of the Pope,
and mea-
sures against
Genoa.
24th June.

At the intelligence of his approach, the Council of the Vatican was thrown into the utmost alarm. Azara, Minister of Spain, was dispatched immediately with offers of submission, and arrived at Bologna to lay the tiara at the feet of the Republican general. The terms of an armistice were soon agreed on:—It was stipulated that Bologna and Ferrara should remain in the possession of the French troops; that the Pope should pay twenty millions of

frances, furnish great contributions of stores and provisions, and give up a hundred of the finest works of art to the French commissioners. In virtue of that humiliating treaty, all the chief monuments of genius which adorned the Eternal City, were soon after transported to the museum at Paris. Genoa at the same time occupied the rapacious eyes of the French general. "You may dictate laws to Genoa as soon as you please," were his expressions, in his instructions to Faypoult, the French envoy there. And to the Directory he wrote,—*"All our affairs in Italy are now closed, excepting Venice and Genoa. As to Venice, the moment for action has not yet arrived; we must first beat Wurmser and take Mantua. But the moment has arrived for Genoa; I am about to break ground for the ten millions. I think, besides, with the minister Faypoult, that we must expel a dozen of families from the government of that city, and oblige the senate to repeal a decree which banished two families favourable to France."* And to Faypoult, Napoleon prescribed his course of perfidious dissimulation in these words: *"I have not yet seen M. Catanio, the Genoese deputy; but I shall neglect nothing which may throw them off their guard. The Directory has ordered me to exact the ten millions, but interdicted all political operations. Omit nothing which may set the Senate asleep; and amuse them with hopes till the moment of wakening has arrived."* The moment of wakening thus contemplated by Napoleon, was an internal revolution, which was not yet fully prepared.¹

Having arranged this important treaty, Napoleon, without delay, crossed the Appenines, and found the division of Vanbois at Pistoia. From that point he detached Murat, who suddenly descended upon Leghorn, and seized the effects of a large portion of the English merchants, which were sold in open violation of all the usages of war, which hitherto had respected private property at land, and from their sale he realised twelve millions of francs for the use of the army. What rendered this outrage more flagrant was, that it was committed in the territories of a neutral power, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, from whom he himself at the time was receiving the most splendid entertainment at Florence.² Thus early did Napoleon evince that unconquerable hatred of English commerce, and that determi-

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1796.

6th July.

14th July.

1 Confident.
Despatch,
14th July.
Corresp.
Conf. i. 330.
334. Nap.
iii. 219.

96.
Violation of
the neutral
territory of
Tuscany,
and seizure
of Leghorn.
26th June.

2 Th. viii.
301. Bot. i.
436. Nap.
iii. 222.

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97.

Massacre of
the peasants
at Lugo.

nation to violate the usages of war for its destruction, by which he was afterwards so strongly actuated, and which had so powerful a share in contributing to his downfall.

The rapine and pillage of the French authorities consequent on this irruption into Tuscany, knew no bounds.

"If our administrative conduct," said Napoleon to the Directory, "was detestable at Leghorn, our political conduct towards Tuscany has been no better." His views extended even further, for on the 25th he wrote to the Directory—

"Reports are in circulation that the Emperor is dying; the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the heir to the throne, will instantly set out for Vienna. We must anticipate him, by taking military possession of the whole of Tuscany."

After a short stay at Florence, Napoleon returned to Bologna, where Augereau took a severe vengeance on the inhabitants of the village of Lugo, who had taken up arms against the Republicans, and killed and wounded some soldiers in a detachment sent for its reduction. The village was carried by assault, burnt to ashes, and the unfortunate peasants, to the number of one thousand, were put with merciless severity to the sword. This terrible example having struck terror into all the inhabitants of that part of Italy, he returned to the vicinity of Mantua, to superintend the operations of the siege, which Serrurier was now about to undertake in good earnest, with the battering-train taken at the castles of Milan, Urbino, and Ferrara; but for the relief of which place Austria was making the most vigorous exertions.¹

¹ Secret
Desp. 11th
and 25th
July.
Corresp.
Conf. vol. i.
Bot. i. 420.
Nap. iii. 225.

The resolution of Napoleon to stir up a quarrel with Venice was more and more clearly evinced, as matters approached a crisis in the north of Italy. On the 25th July, he had a long and confidential conversation with Pesaro, the commissioner of that republic; and such was the vehemence of his language, the exaggeration of his complaints, and the sternness of his manner, that that commissioner forthwith wrote to the Senate of St Mark that war appeared inevitable. It was in vain that Pesaro represented, "that ever since the entrance of the French into Italy, his government had made it their study to anticipate all the wishes of the General-in-chief; that, if it had not done more, it was solely from inability, and a desire not to embroil itself with the Imperialists,

98.
Napoleon's
secret mea-
sures to
bring on a
rupture with
Venice.

who never ceased to reproach them with their partiality to France; that the Senate would do every thing in its power to restrain the public effervescence; and that the armaments, so much complained of, were directed as much against the English and Russians as the French."¹ The determination of Napoleon in regard to the Venetian Republic is revealed in his secret despatches at this period to the Directory: "I have seized," said he, "the citadel of Verona, armed it with the Venetian cannon, and summoned the Senate to dissolve its armaments. Venice has already furnished three millions for the service of the army; but, in order to extract more out of it, I have found myself under the necessity of assuming a menacing tone towards their commissaries, of exaggerating the assassinations committed on our troops, of complaining bitterly of their armaments; and by these means I compel them, to appease my wrath, to furnish whatever I desire. This is the only way to deal with such persons. There is not, on the face of the earth, a more perfidious or cowardly government. I will force them to provide supplies for the army till the fall of Mantua, and then announce that they must further make good the contributions fixed in your instructions."²

No sooner had they received intelligence of the defeat of Beaulieu, and the retreat of his forces into the Tyrol, than the Aulic Council resolved upon the most energetic measures to repair the disaster. The army of Beaulieu retired to Roveredo, where they threw up intrenchments to cover their position, while eight thousand Tyrolese occupied the crests of the mountains, which separated the valley of the Adige from the lake of Guarda. Meanwhile Marshal Wurmser was detached from the Upper Rhine with thirty thousand men, to assume the chief command of the army destined for the relief of Mantua; which, by that great reinforcement, and numerous detachments drawn from the interior, was raised to sixty thousand effective troops. These extensive preparations, which were magnified by report, and had roused the aristocratic party throughout Italy to great exertions, filled Napoleon with the most lively apprehensions. To oppose them he had only fifty-five thousand men, of whom fifteen thousand were engaged in the siege of Mantua, and ten thousand in

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¹ Letter of
Lallemand
to Napoleon,
26th July.
Corresp.
Confid. de
Nap. Hard.
iii. 424.

² Secret
Despatch of
Napoleon,
July 22.
Corresp. i.
327.

99.
Efforts of
the Austri-
ans for the
relief of
Mantua.

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keeping up his communication and maintaining garrisons in the conquered territory; so that not above thirty thousand could be relied on for operations in the field. He had incessantly urged the Directory to send him reinforcements; but, although eight thousand men from the army of Kellerman had joined his standard, and numerous reinforcements from the depots in the interior, they were barely adequate to repair the losses arising from that wasteful campaign. Nothing but the greatest ability on the part of the general, and courage among the soldiers, could have compensated for this inferiority in numbers; but the genius of Napoleon, and the confidence arising from a series of victories, proved adequate to the task. His success was mainly owing to the vicious plan of attack adopted by the Austrians, which, like all the others framed by the Aulic Council, was exposed to defeat from the division of their forces.¹

¹ Jom. viii.
302, 303.
Nap iii. 231,
232. Th.
viii. 360.

100.
Description
of the
theatre of
war.

The waters which descend from the southern ridges of the Tyrol, unite into two streams, flowing nearly parallel to each other, and issuing in the same latitude into the plain of Lombardy, the Mincio and the Adige. The first forms, in its course, the noble sheet of water called the lake of Guarda, flows through the plain immortalised by the genius of Virgil, swells into the lakes which surround Mantua, and afterwards discharges itself into the Po. The latter, after descending from the snowy ridges of the Higher Alps, flows in an open valley to a narrow and precipitous pass above Verona, next emerges into the open country, winds in a deep and rocky bed to Legnago, after which it spreads into vast marshes, and is lost in the dikes and inundations of Lombardy. Three roads present themselves to an enemy proposing to issue from the Tyrol to the Italian plains:—The first, turning sharp to the left at Roveredo, traverses the romantic defiles of the Val Sugana, and emerges into the open country at Bassano. The second passes by the upper end of the lake of Guarda, and comes down by its western shore to Salò and Brescia; while the third descends the left bank of the Adige, and, after traversing the gloomy pass of Calliano and Chiusa, reaches the smiling plains of Italy, a few miles above the town of Verona.² The space between the Adige and the lake of Guarda, though only three leagues broad, is filled by the

² Th. viii.
362, 364.
Jom. viii.
305. Personal obser-
vation.

Montebaldo, the precipices of which restrain the river on the one hand and the lake on the other. In this narrow and rocky space a road descends between the Adige and the lake, from Roveredo to the plain. It follows the right bank of the stream as far as Osteria della Dugana, when, meeting impracticable precipices, it turns to the right, and ascends the plateau of Rivoli.

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The outlets of all these passes were occupied by the French troops. Sauret, with only four thousand five hundred men, was posted at Salo, to guard the western side of the lake of Guarda, as the road there was not accessible to artillery. Massena, with fifteen thousand, guarded the great road along the Adige, and occupied the plateau of Rivoli; while Despinos, with five thousand, was in the environs of Verona; and Augereau, with eight thousand in reserve, at Legnago. Napoleon himself, with two thousand horse, took post at Castelnovo, in order to be equally near any of the points that might be menaced. Wurmser's plan was to make demonstrations only against Verona and the left of the Adige; and to bring down the bulk of his forces by the Montebaldo and the valley of Salo, on the opposite sides of the lake of Guarda. For this purpose he detached Quasdanovich, with twenty thousand men, to go round the upper end of the lake, and descend upon Salo, while he took the command of forty thousand himself, whom he distributed on the two roads which descend the opposite banks of the Adige; the one division was destined to force Carona and the plateau of Rivoli, while the other was to debouche upon Verona. The whole columns were in motion by the end of July; rumour had magnified their numbers; and the partisans of Austria and of the aristocratic system were already breaking out into exultation, and anticipating the speedy verification of the proverb—"That Italy was the tomb of the French."¹

101.
Positions of
the French,
and Austri-
an plan of
attack.

¹ Jom. viii.
312. Nap.
iii. 233, 235.
Th. viii. 4.

In truth, the circumstances of the Republicans were all but desperate. On the 29th July, the Imperial outposts attacked the French at all points, and every where with success. Massena, vigorously assaulted at three in the morning by superior forces, was driven from the intrenchments of Carona, and retired with loss to Rivoli, from whence he was glad to escape towards Castelnovo, upon

102.
And great
success in
the out-
July 29.

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finding that the column which followed the left bank of the Adige was getting in his rear. At the same time, the Imperialists drove in the Republican posts on the great road, forced the pass of Chiusa, and appeared before Verona; while, on the other side of the lake of Guarda, Lusignan attacked and carried the town of Salo, and thus cut off the principal line of retreat towards France. In this extremity, Napoleon, for the first time in the whole campaign, called a council of war. All the officers, with the exception of Augereau, recommended a retreat behind the Po; but that intrepid chief resolutely held out for battle. The generals were dismissed without the commander-in-chief having signified his own opinion, but in the course of the night he formed a resolution which not only extricated him from his perilous situation, but has immortalised his name in the annals of war.¹

¹ Th. viii.
364, 367.
Jom. viii.
312, 313.
Nap. iii.
233.

103.
Extreme
peril of Na-
poleon.
He raises
the siege of
Mantua.

The Austrians, fifty thousand strong, were descending the opposite banks of the lake of Guarda, and it was evident that, if they succeeded in enclosing the French army near Mantua, they would infallibly crush it by their great superiority of force. But in so doing they exposed themselves to be attacked and beaten by superior forces in detail, if the siege of that place were rapidly raised, and the bulk of the French army thrown first on the one invading column and then on the other. Napoleon resolved on this sacrifice. Orders were immediately dispatched to Serrurier to raise the siege of Mantua; the division of Augereau was moved from Legnago across the Mincio; and the French army, with the exception of Massena's division, concentrated at the lower extremity of the lake of Guarda, to fall, in the first instance, upon the corps of Quasdanovich, which already threatened his communications with Milan. These orders were promptly obeyed. During the night of the 31st July, the siege of Mantua was raised, the cannon spiked, and the stores thrown into the lake, while Napoleon himself, with the greater part of his army, crossed the Mincio at Peschiera, and prepared to fall on the Austrian forces on the western shore of the lake of Guarda. There was not a moment to lose; in a few hours the allied columns would be in communication,² and the French compelled to fight greatly superior forces in a single field.

31st July.

² Jom. viii.
316. Nap.
iii. 238, 239.
Th. viii. 362,
369. Hard.
iii. 430.

No sooner had Napoleon arrived with his reinforcements, than he sent forward Augereau to clear the road to Milan, and ordered Sauret to retake Salo.

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Both expeditions were completely successful; Brescia was regained, and the Austrians were driven out of Salo. Meanwhile, Napoleon himself, with the brigade of D'Allemagne, advanced to Lonato; and after a violent struggle, drove the Imperialists out of that place, with the loss of five hundred prisoners. In these actions Quasdanovich lost few men; but his progress was arrested, and, astonished at finding himself assailed by imposing masses, in a quarter where he expected to find only the rear of the enemy, he fell back towards the mountains, to await intelligence of the operations of the main body under Wurmser. Meanwhile that brave commander, having dislodged Massena from his position, advanced to Mantua, into which fortress he made his triumphal entry on the 1st August. The

104.
Napoleon
resumes the
offensive,
and arrests
Quasdanovich.

August 1.

sudden raising of the siege, the abandonment of the equipage, the destruction of works which it had cost the Republicans so long to construct, all conspired to increase his satisfaction at this event, and promised an easy conquest over the retiring remains of the enemy. But, on the very night of his arrival, he received intelligence of the check of Quasdanovich, and the capture of Brescia. Immediately he advanced his columns across the Mincio, and moved upon Castiglione, with the design of enveloping the French army with all his forces, while Quasdanovich resumed the offensive, and retook the town of Salo. The crisis was now approaching: the Austrian armies were not only in communication, but almost united, while the Republicans, with inferior forces, lay between them. Napoleon immediately drew back the divisions of Massena and Augereau, above twenty thousand strong, and caused his whole army to face about: what had been the rear became the advanced guard. He put forth more than his wonted activity and rapidity of movement. Incessantly on horseback himself, he caused the soldiers, who had marched all night, to fight all day. Having, by this rapid countermarch, accumulated the bulk of his forces opposite to Wurmser, he resolved to deliver himself from that formidable adversary by an immediate attack. It was full time.¹ The Austrians had discovered a passage over the

¹ Nap. iii.
241. Th.
viii. 371, 372.
Jom. viii.
381. Hard.
iii. 432, 433.

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105.
Battle of
Lonato.
3d August.

Mincio, and driven the French from Castiglione, where they had already begun to intrench themselves.

On the 3d August, Napoleon advanced, with twenty-five thousand men, upon LONATO, while Augereau moved towards CASTIGLIONE. The first attack of the Republicans upon the former town was unsuccessful; their light troops were thrown into confusion; General Pégion, with three pieces of artillery, captured by the enemy, and Lonato taken. Upon this, the French general put himself at the head of his soldiers, and formed the centre into one formidable mass; while the Imperialists were extending themselves towards Salò, in the double view of enveloping the French, and opening a communication with Quasdanovich, whose artillery was already heard in that direction. Napoleon immediately perceived the error of his adversary, and made a desperate charge, with a column of infantry supported by cavalry, upon his centre, which, being weakened for the extension of the wings, speedily gave way. Lonato was retaken by assault, and the Austrian army cut asunder. One part of it effected its retreat under Bayalitch to the Mincio, but the other, which was moving towards Salò, finding itself irrecoverably separated from the main body, endeavoured to effect a junction with Quasdanovich at Salò; but Guyeux, with a division of French, already occupied that place; and the fugitive Austrians, pressed between the dragoons of Junot, who assailed their rear, and the infantry at Salò, who stopped their advance, disbanded, and sustained a loss of three thousand prisoners, and twenty pieces of cannon.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
242. Jom.
viii. 320.
Vict. et
Conq. vi.
244, 246.

106.
Glorious
efforts of
Augereau at
Castiglione.

While the Austrians were experiencing these disasters at Lonato, Augereau, on the right, had maintained an obstinate engagement at Castiglione. There the Republicans were the assailants, and the object of the French general was to make himself master of Castiglione, the key to the French position in that quarter. With this view he had detached General Robert, with a regiment of the line, to gain, by a long circuit, the rear of the enemy; while General Pelletier, with two battalions, turned their right, and Augereau himself, at the head of the main body of his forces, advanced direct against the Austrian position in the plain. The Austrians made a stout resistance; but being at length compelled to give ground, they were thrown into

confusion by the sudden apparition of Robert's two battalions, which sprung out of an ambuscade in their rear. Taking advantage of this disorder, Augereau pushed on to gain the bridge of Castiglione, an indispensable preliminary to the capture of the town of the same name. But the Austrians, under Liptay, having brought up their reserve, returned to the charge with the most determined resistance; and it was only by the most heroic efforts, in which Augereau exposed his person like a simple grenadier, that the bridge was at length carried, and the enemy driven back into the town, which the victors entered pell-mell with the vanquished. The Austrians at length retired towards Mantua, entirely evacuating the town, after having sustained a loss of two thousand men; and before they had proceeded far they met the reinforcements which Wurmser was bringing up to their relief. This desperate strife first drew Napoleon's notice to the determined character of Augereau, whose title was afterwards taken from it; and he frequently reminded him in later days, when wishing to rouse him to extraordinary efforts, "*Des beaux jours de Castiglione.*"¹

As it was evident that the Austrian veteran was still disposed to contend for the empire of Italy in a pitched battle, Napoleon deemed it indispensable to clear his rear of Quasdanovich before engaging in it. On the following day he employed himself in collecting and organising his forces at Lonato, with a view to the decisive conflict; while, by moving two divisions against Quasdanovich, whose troops were now exhausted by fatigue, he compelled him to remount the Val Sabbia towards Riva. A singular event at this time took place, highly characteristic both of the extraordinarily intersected situation of the two armies, and of the presence of mind and good fortune of Napoleon. He had arrived at Lonato to expedite the movement of his forces in the opposite directions where their enemies were to be found; and, from the dispersion which he had ordered, only twelve hundred men remained at headquarters. Before he had been long there, he was summoned to surrender by a corps of four thousand Austrians, who had already occupied all the avenues by which retreat was possible. They consisted of a part of the troops of Bayalitch, which, having been

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¹ Vict. et
Conq. vi.
246, 249.
Jom. viii.
320. Nap.
iii. 242.

107.
Surrender of
4000 Austri-
ans to Na-
poleon's
staff and
1200 men.

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defeated in its attempts to effect a junction with Quasdanovich, was now, in desperation, endeavouring to regain the remainder of the army on the Mincio. Napoleon made his numerous staff mount on horseback; and, having ordered the officer bearing the flag of truce to be brought before him, directed the bandage to be taken from his eyes, and immediately told the astonished Austrian, that he was in the middle of the French army, and in presence of its general-in-chief, and that unless they laid down their arms in ten minutes, he would put them all to the sword. The officer, deceived by the splendid *cortège* by which he was surrounded, returned to his division, and recommended a surrender; and the troops, cut off from their companions, and exhausted by fatigue and disaster, laid down their arms. When they entered the town, they had the mortification of discovering not only that they had capitulated to a third of their numbers, but missed the opportunity of making prisoner the conqueror who had filled the world with his renown.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
243, 245.
Th. viii.
375. Jom.
viii. 326,
327. Bot. i.
453. Vict.
et Conq. vi.
250, 251.

109.
Both parties
prepare for
a decisive
battle.

On the following day both parties prepared for a decisive engagement. The Imperialists under Wurmser were twenty-five thousand strong, the corps of Quasdanovich, and that which blockaded Peschiera, being detached, and unable to take any part in the battle; the French about twenty-three thousand. Both parties were drawn up in the plain at right angles to the mountains, on which each rested a wing; the French right was uncovered, while the Imperialists' left was supported by the mill of Medola. Augereau commanded the centre, Massena the left, Verdier the right; but the principal hopes of Napoleon were rested on the division of Serrurier, which had orders to march all night, and fall, when the action was fully engaged, on the rear of the enemy. The soldiers on both sides were exhausted with fatigue, but all felt that on the result of this contest depended the fate of Italy.²

² Jom. viii.
328. Th.
viii. 378,
379. Vict.
et Conq. vi.
252, 255.
5th Aug.

109.
Battle of
Medola.

Wurmser fell into the same error as Bayalitch had done in the preceding engagement, that of extending his right along the heights, in order to open a communication with Quasdanovich, who was within hearing of his artillery. To favour this movement, Napoleon drew back his left, while at the same time he accumulated his forces against the Austrians' right; Marmont with a powerful battery.

of heavy artillery, thundered against the post of Medola, which Verdier, with three battalions of grenadiers, speedily carried. At the same time, General Fiorilla, who commanded the division of Serrurier, drawn off from Mantua, came up in rear of the Austrians, and completed their confusion by a vigorous attack, which had wellnigh carried off Wurmser himself. Seeing the decisive moment arrived, Napoleon ordered a general charge by all his forces; and the Austrians, pressed in front by Augereau and Massena, threatened in rear by Fiorilla, and turned on their left by Verdier, fell back at all points. The excessive fatigue of the Republican troops prevented their pursuing the broken enemy far, who fell back behind the Mincio, with the loss of two thousand killed and wounded, one thousand prisoners, and twenty pieces of cannon. This action, the importance of which is not to be estimated by the number of troops engaged, was decisive of the fate of Italy. With a view to prevent Wurmser from reassembling his scattered forces, Napoleon, on the following day, sent Massena to raise the siege of Peschiera, and, after an obstinate engagement, he succeeded in routing the Austrian division before that place, with the loss of ten pieces of cannon, and five hundred prisoners. In this action a young colonel particularly distinguished himself, named SUCHET, afterwards Duke of Albufera. At the same time Napoleon advanced to Verona, which the Austrians abandoned on his approach; and Massena, after some sharp skirmishing, resumed his old positions at Rivoli and the Montebaldo; while Wurmser, having revictualled Mantua, and raised its garrison to fifteen thousand men, composed chiefly of fresh troops, resumed his former station at Roveredo, and in the fastnesses of the Tyrol.¹

By this expedition Wurmser had relieved Mantua, and supplied it with a garrison of fresh troops; but he had lost nearly twenty thousand men, and sixty pieces of cannon; and the spirit of his soldiers was, by fatigue, defeat, and disaster, completely broken. The great successes which attended the French arms, are mainly to be ascribed to the extraordinary vigour, activity, and talent, displayed by their general-in-chief. The Austrian plan of attack was founded on an undue confidence in their own powers; they thought the main body under Wurmser would be

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Aug. 6.

Aug. 11.

¹ Nap. iii.

246, 248.

Jom. viii.

331, 335.

Th. viii.

379.

^{110.}

Result of these actions, and causes of the French success.

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able to defeat the French army, and raise the siege of Mantua, while the detachment under Quasdanovich would cut off their retreat : and it must be admitted, in favour of this plan, that it was on the point of being attended with complete success ; and against a general and troops of less resolution, unquestionably would have been so. When opposed, however, to the vigour and activity of Napoleon, it offered the fairest opportunity for decisive defeat. The two corps of the Imperialists could communicate only by Roveredo and the upper end of the lake of Guarda, a circuit of above sixty miles ; while the French, occupying a central station between them, at its southern extremity, were enabled, though on the whole inferior, by a great exertion of activity, to bring a superior force, first against the one and then against the other. Their successes, however, were dearly purchased : above seven thousand men had been killed and wounded ; Wurmser carried with him three thousand prisoners into the Tyrol ; and the whole siege equipage of Mantua had fallen into the hands of the enemy, or been lost.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
248, 250.
Th. viii.
381.

111.
Blockade of
Mantua re-
sumed.
Formation
of the Polish
Legion.

The democratic party in all the Italian towns were thrown into transports of joy at this success ; and the rejoicings among them at Milan, Bologna, and Modena, were proportioned to the terror with which they had formerly been inspired. But Napoleon, judging more accurately of his position, and seeing the siege of Mantua was to be commenced anew, while Wurmser, with forty thousand men, was still on the watch in the Tyrol, deemed prudence and precaution more than ever necessary. He did not attempt, therefore, to collect a second battering train for the siege of that fortress, but contented himself with a simple blockade, in maintaining which during the autumnal months, his troops became extremely sickly, from the pestilential atmosphere of its marshes. To the powers in the southern parts of the Peninsula who had, during the temporary success of the Austrians, given indication of hostile designs, he wrote in the most menacing strain ; the King of Naples was threatened with an attack from seventy thousand French if he violated the armistice ; the Papal legate obtained pardon for a revolt at Ferrara only by the most abject submission ; the Venetians were informed that he was aware of their

armaments, though he still kept up negotiations, and continued to live at their expense; while the King of Piedmont received commands to complete the destruction of the guerilla parties which infested the mountainous parts of his dominions. To the Milanese, on the other hand, who had remained faithful to France during its transient reverses, he wrote in the most flattering terms, and gave them leave to raise troops for their common defence against the Imperial forces. The most ardent of the youth of Lombardy were speedily enrolled under the Republican banners: but a more efficient force was formed out of the Poles, who, since the last partition of their unhappy country, had wandered without a home through Europe, and now flocked in such numbers to the Italian standard, as to lay the foundation of the Polish legion, which afterwards became so renowned in the Imperial wars.¹

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¹ Nap. iii.
251, 253.
Th. viii.
382, 384.
Bot. i. 454.
Hard. iii.
346.

The troops on both sides remained in a state of repose for three weeks after this terrible struggle, during which Wurmser was assiduously employed in reorganising and recruiting his forces, while Napoleon received considerable reinforcements from the army of Kellerman and the interior of France. The numbers on both sides were, at the end of August, nearly equal; Wurmser's army having been raised to nearly fifty thousand men, by additions from the hereditary states, and Napoleon's to the same amount by the junction of Kellerman's forces.* Untaught by former disasters, of the imprudence of forming plans at a distance for the regulation of their armies, the Aulic Council again framed and transmitted to Wurmser a plan for the expulsion of the French from the line of the Adige. According to this design, he was to leave twenty thousand men under Davidovich, to guard Roveredo and the valley of the Adige, and descend himself, with thirty thousand, by the gorges of the Brenta to Bassano, and so reach the plains of Padua. Thus, notwithstanding their former disasters, they were about again to commit the same error, of dividing their force into two columns, while Napoleon occupied a central position² equidistant from

112.
Wurmser
again ad-
vances, and
the French
issue forth
to meet
him.

² Th. viii.
393, 394.
Nap. iii. 256.
Vict. et
Conq. vi.
268, 272.

* The sick and wounded in the French army at this period were no less than fifteen thousand.—*Confidential Despatch, 25th August.*—*Corresp. Conf.* i. 441.

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113
Napoleon
resumes the
offensive.

both ; with this difference, that, instead of a lake, they had now a mass of impassable mountains between them.

Napoleon, at the same time, resolved to resume the offensive, in order to prevent any detachments from the Imperial army into Bavaria, where the Archduke Charles was now severely pressed by Moreau. The two armies broke up at the same time, Wurmser descending the Brenta, and Napoleon ascending the Adige. Foreseeing the possibility of a descent upon Mantua during his absence, the French general left Kilmaine, with three thousand men, to occupy Legnago and Verona, while ten thousand still maintained the blockade of Mantua, and he himself, with thirty thousand, ascended the Tyrol by the two roads on the banks of the Adige, and that on the western side of the lake of Guarda. The French were the first to commence operations. Early in September, Vau-bois, with the division of Sauret, ascended the lake, and, after several combats, reached Tortola, at its upper extremity. On the same day Napoleon, with the divisions of Massena and Augereau, arrived in front of the advanced posts of the Austrians at Serravalle, on the Adige, and on the following day attacked their position. The Imperialists stood firm ; but Napoleon sent out a cloud of light troops on the heights on either side of their columns, and, the moment they began to waver, he made so vigorous a charge along the *chaussée* with the hussars, that the Austrians were driven back in confusion, and the Republicans entered Roveredo pell-mell with the fugitives.¹

3d Sept.

4th Sept.

¹ Th. viii.
394, 396.
Nap. iii. 259.
Bot. i. 460.
Vict. et
Conq. vi.
274, 280.

Davidovich rallied his broken divisions in the defile of Calliano, a formidable pass on the banks of the Adige, formed where the precipices of the Alps approach so closely to the river that there is only the breadth of four hundred toises left between them. An old castle, which the Austrians had strengthened and mounted with cannon, was placed at the edge of the precipice, and a ruined wall stretched across the gorge, from the foot of the rocks to the margin of the stream. Napoleon threw his light troops on the mountains upon his own right, placed a battery, which commanded the Austrian cannon, and forming a close column of ten battalions, precipitated them along the high-road upon the enemy. Nothing

114.
Defeat of
Davidovich
near Calli-
ano.

could withstand their impetuosity ; the Imperialists were routed ; horse, foot, and cannon rushed in confusion through the narrow defile in their rear ; and the Republican cavalry, charging furiously along the *chaussée*, drove them, in the utmost disorder, towards Trent. Seven hundred prisoners and fifteen pieces of cannon fell into the hands of the victors ; and on the following day Napoleon entered that city, the capital of the Italian Tyrol, while the discomfited remains of Davidovich's corps retired behind the Lavis.¹

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5th Sept.
¹ Nap. iii.
258, 260.
Th. viii.
397, 398.
Personal
observation.

The intelligence of this disaster, so far from stopping, only accelerated the march of Wurmser through the defiles of the Brenta. He now imagined that Napoleon intended to penetrate by Brixen and the Brenner into Germany, in order to co-operate with Moreau in the plains of Bavaria ; and the Austrian veteran immediately conceived the bold design of hastening, with his whole disposable force, down the Val Sugana into the plain of Bassano, turning rapidly to the right, seizing upon Verona, and both raising the siege of Mantua and preventing the return of Napoleon into Italy. The French general, who, by treachery at the Austrian head-quarters, was uniformly put in possession of his adversary's plans before they could be executed, immediately perceived the danger which would result from this measure on the part of the enemy, and resolved to oppose it by another, equally bold, on his own side. This was, to leave the division of Vaubois alone in the Tyrol to make head against Davidovich, and descend himself, with twenty-four thousand men, the defiles of the Brenta, and attack Wurmser before he had got round to Verona." In doing this, he ran the risk, it is true, of being himself shut up in the terrible defiles of the Val Sugana, surrounded by precipices and peaks of a stupendous elevation, between Wurmser in front and Davidovich in rear ; but he trusted to the resolution of his troops to overcome every obstacle, and hoped, by driving his antagonist back on the Adige, to compel his whole force to lay down their arms.²

115.
Napoleon
advances
against
Wurmser.

² Th. viii.
399. Nap.
iii. 262.
Hard. iii.
448.

At break of day on the 6th, the French troops were in motion ; from the valley of the Trent they soon surmounted the ridge which forms its eastern boundary, and, descending the torrent of the Val Sugana, they reached

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116.

Action near
Primolano,
in the Val
Sugana.

Borgo di Val Sugana at night, after having marched ten leagues. On the following morning they continued their march, and at the entrance of the narrow defiles, came up with the Austrian rearguard, strongly posted near Primolano. Napoleon put in practice the same manœuvre which had succeeded so well at Calliano, covering the mountains on either side with his tirailleurs, and forming a close column of infantry to attack the pass along the high-road. Nothing could resist the impetuosity of the French troops. The Austrians, who were greatly inferior in number, being only the rearguard of the main force, were routed with the loss of two thousand prisoners and nine pieces of cannon. The fugitives were pursued as far as Cesmona, where headquarters were established. Napoleon, in his eagerness to pursue the enemy, outrode all his suite, and passed the night alone, wrapped in his cloak, on the ground, in the midst of a regiment of infantry who bivouacked round the town. A private soldier shared with him his rations, and reminded him of it, after he became Emperor, in the camp at Boulogne.¹

¹ Bot. i. 464.
Nap. iii. 263,
264. Th.
viii. 400.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
76, 79.

6

117.
Wurmser
defeated
near Bas-
sano by
Massena.

On the same day in which this action took place in the gorges of the Val Sugana, the advanced guard of Wurmser, under Mezaros, had reached Verona, and was already skirmishing with the posts of the Republicans on the fortifications which had been erected round that city, when they were recalled to make head against the terrible enemy which had assailed their rear. Wurmser collected all his forces at Bassano to endeavour to bar the passage, and throw the French back into the defiles; the heavy infantry and artillery were placed on a strong position in front of the town and round its mouldering towers, while six battalions of light troops occupied the opening of the valley into the plain. These were speedily overthrown, and the divisions of Massena and Augereau, emerging from the defiles, found themselves in presence of a brilliant force of twenty thousand men, with a powerful artillery, drawn up in battle array. But the Austrians, discouraged by repeated defeats, made but a feeble resistance. Massena speedily routed them on the right, while Augereau broke them on the left: the fugitives rushed in confusion into the town, where they were immediately followed by the victorious troops,² who made four thousand prisoners, and

² Th. viii.
401, 402.
Nap. iii.
265, 266.
Bot. i. 465.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
79, 80.

captured thirty pieces of cannon, besides almost all the baggage, pontoons, and ammunition of the army.

During the confusion of this defeat the Austrians got separated from each other; Quasdanovich, with three thousand men, was thrown back towards Friuli, while Wurmser, with sixteen thousand, took the road to Mantua. The situation of the veteran marshal was all but desperate: Massena was pressing his rear, while Porto Legnago and Verona were both in the hands of the enemy, and the loss of all his pontoons at Bassano rendered it impossible to pass the Adige but at one or other of these places. Fortunately for him, the battalion which occupied Porto Legnago had been withdrawn to Verona during the attack on that place, and the one destined to replace it had not yet arrived. By a rapid march he reached that town before the Republicans, and thus got his troops across the Adige. Napoleon, following his prey with breathless anxiety, no sooner discovered that the passage at Legnago was secured, than he pushed Massena across the river to Cerra, in order to cut him from the road to Mantua. But the Austrians fought with the courage of despair, and their cavalry, five thousand strong, who were unbroken, and whose spirit had not suffered by disaster, proved irresistible to their enemies. Napoleon himself, who had come up during the engagement, had great difficulty in saving himself by flight; and Wurmser, who arrived a few minutes after, deemed himself so secure of his antagonist, that he recommended to his dragoons to take him alive. Having missed so brilliant a stroke, the old marshal continued his march, passed the Mollenilla, cut to pieces a body of eight hundred infantry which endeavoured to interrupt his progress, and entered Mantua in a species of triumph which threw a ray of glory over his long series of disasters.¹

Encouraged by these successes, he still endeavoured to keep the field with twenty thousand infantry and five thousand horse, and soon after his cuirassiers destroyed a regiment of light infantry at Due Castelle. But this was the termination of his transient gleam of prosperity. Napoleon brought up the greater part of his forces, and soon after Augereau stormed Porto Legnago, and made prisoners a thousand men, and fifteen pieces of cannon; a stroke which, by depriving Wurmser of the means of

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118.

He throws
himself into
Mantua.

¹ Th. viii.
404. Nap.
iii. 270.
Bot. i. 465.
Hard. iii.
447, 449.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
83, 84.

119.
Where he is
shut up by
the French.

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passing the Adige, threw him back on Mantua. On the 19th, he was attacked by the divisions of Augereau and Massena with an equal force. The Austrian cavalry at first drove back Augereau, and the battle seemed for a time doubtful; but a vigorous charge by Massena in the centre restored affairs, and Wurmser was at length repulsed into Mantua, with the loss of three thousand men and twenty pieces of cannon. Two days afterwards, he threw a bridge over the Po, and attacked Governolo, one of the fortresses erected by the French at the termination of the dikes, with the design of cutting his way through to the Adige; but he was repulsed with the loss of six hundred men and four pieces of cannon; and in the beginning of October, Kilmaine resumed his old lines round the town, and the Austrians were shut in on every side within its walls. Wurmser killed the horses of his numerous and splendid cavalry, salted their carcasses, and made every preparation for a vigorous defence: while Napoleon dispatched his aide-de-camp, MARMONT,* afterwards Duke of Ragusa, with the standards taken in these glorious actions, to lay at the feet of the French government.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
273. Bot. i.
472, 473.
Th. viii.
405. Vict.
et Conq. vii.
82, 86.

120.
Results of
these ac-
tions.

By the result of these conflicts the Austrian army in the field was reduced from fifty thousand to fifteen thousand men, of whom twelve thousand, under Davidovich, had taken refuge in the defiles leading to Mount Brenner, while three thousand, under Quasdanovich, were in the mountains of Friuli. Wurmser, it is true, had brought sixteen thousand into Mantua; but this force, accumulated in a besieged and unhealthy town, was of no real service

Early history
of Marmont.

* Auguste Frederic de Marmont was born at Chatillon sur Seine on 20th July 1774. His father, who belonged to an old and respectable military family, had himself followed the profession of arms: and he destined his son, from his earliest years, to the same. At the early age of fifteen, he received his commission as sub-lieutenant in a regiment of infantry; and was transferred, in January 1792, into one of artillery. He made his first essay in arms in the campaign of 1792, when he was attached to the army of the Alps. In 1792 he served at the siege of Toulon, and his skill in gunnery there first attracted the notice of Napoleon. He subsequently accompanied the future emperor to Paris, and shared in his disgrace after the 9th Thermidor. Having afterwards got employment with the army of the Rhine, he distinguished himself at the combat of Monbach and several lesser affairs, in which he commanded, under Desaix, the artillery of the advanced guard. After the armistice in December 1795 had terminated active operations on the Rhine, he returned to Paris, where Napoleon had now risen into high favour with government, in consequence of the suppression of the revolt of the Sections; and from him he obtained the situation of aide-de-camp, which he held through all the Italian campaigns. Overflowing with courage, he was with the advanced guard of cavalry which crossed the

during the remainder of the campaign, and rather, by increasing the number of useless mouths within the place, accelerated the period of its ultimate surrender. Before the end of October, ten thousand of the garrison were in the hospitals, so that the besieged were unable either to make any use of their superfluous numbers, or get quit of the unserviceable persons who consumed their scanty provisions. But these successes, great as they were, had not been purchased without a very heavy loss to the French army, who, in these actions, were weakened by above fifteen thousand men, in killed, wounded, and prisoners.¹

Both parties remained in inactivity for a considerable time after these exhausting efforts, during which the Austrians were energetically employed in repairing their losses, and the Republicans in drawing forces from the other side of the Alps. They took advantage of the delay to organise revolutionary powers throughout all the north of Italy. Bologna and Ferrara were united under a provincial government; Republican forces and Jacobin clubs established, and all the machinery of democracy put in full operation; Modena was revolutionised, the old government replaced by a popular assembly, and French troops admitted within its walls; while legions of national guards were organised throughout the whole of Lombardy. But more efficient auxiliaries were approaching. Twelve battalions from the army of La Vendée, besides the remainder of the forces of Kellerman, joyfully crossed the Alps, happy to exchange the scene of utter penury and inglorious warfare, for the luxurious quarters and shining achievements of the Italian army. In the end of October, Alvinzi, who had assumed the command of the army in Friuli, had assembled forty thousand men under his standards; while

river above Lodi, and had his horse shot under him on that occasion: notwithstanding which, he captured the first gun which was taken in that terrible combat, for which he received a sabre of honour. At the battle of Castiglione he also distinguished himself; and so brilliant were the services which he rendered during the actions at Arcola, that Napoleon selected him to bear the standards taken to the Directory at Paris.² He became marshal of France, and shared largely in the glories and dangers of Napoleon's campaigns. He was a most able general, and, in the movements of a campaign, second to none of the emperor's lieutenants, though on the field of battle he had not the daring of Murat, or the cool determination of Davoust. Defeated at Salamanca by Wellington, he had afterwards the misfortune to be twice compelled to sign a capitulation of Paris. But his reputation has survived these rude shocks; and his Travels in the East prove, that to the eye of a general he united the accomplishments of a scholar, and the heart of a philanthropist.

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¹ Hard. iii.
450. Nap.
iii. or
Jom. ix. 126.
Th. iii. 406.
Vict. et
Conq. vi.
86, 88.

121.
Vast efforts
on both sides
to recruit
their forces.

² Biographie
des Contemporains, xv.
1-S.

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1 Th. viii.
448, 449.

Jom. ix. 145,
158. Nap.
iii. 345, 346.
Nov. 1.

122.
Alvinzi
again ad-
vances.

Nov. 6.

2 Nap. iii.
437. Th.
viii. 543.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
186, 189.

8th Oct.

the corps of Davidovich was raised, by the junction of a large body of the Tyrolese militia, a force admirably adapted for mountain warfare, to eighteen thousand men. To oppose this mass of assailants, Napoleon had twelve thousand men under Vaubois, on the Lavis, in front of Trent; twenty thousand on the Brenta and the Adige observing Alvinzi, and ten thousand guarding the lines round Mantua. The disproportion, therefore, was very great in every quarter, and Napoleon, justly alarmed at his situation, and chagrined at the Directory for not putting a larger force at his disposal, wrote to the government that he was about to lose the whole of his Italian conquests.¹

The Austrian preparations being completed, Alvinzi, on the 1st November, threw two bridges over the Piave, and advanced against Massena, whose headquarters were at Bassano. At the approach of the Imperialists in such superior force, the French fell back to Vicenza, and Napoleon hastened, with the division of Augereau, and the reserve, to their support. On the 6th, a general battle took place. Massena overthrew the Austrian left, commanded by Provera and Liptay, and drove them with loss over the Brenta; while Napoleon himself defeated the right, under Quasdanovich, and would have carried the town of Bassano, which the Imperialists occupied in force, had not HOHENZOLLERN, who advanced at the head of the Austrian reserve, made good the place till nightfall. But early on the following morning, the general received intelligence from Vaubois,² in the Tyrol, which not only interrupted

* Napoleon's letter was in these terms:—"Mantua cannot be reduced before the middle of February; you will perceive from that how critical our situation is: and our political system is, if possible, still worse. Peace with Naples is indispensable; an alliance with Genoa and Turin necessary. Lose no time in taking the people of Lombardy, Modena, Bologna, and Ferrara, under your protection, and, above all, send reinforcements. The Emperor has thrice reformed his army since the commencement of the campaign. Every thing is going wrong in Italy; the *prestige* of our forces is dissipated; the enemy now count our ranks. It is indispensable that you take into your instant consideration the critical situation of the Italian army, and forthwith secure it friends both among kings and people. The influence of Rome is incalculable; you did wrong in breaking with that power; I would have temporised with it, as we have done with Venice and Genoa. Whenever the general in Italy is not the centre of negotiation as well as military operations, the greatest risks will be incurred. You may ascribe this language to ambition; but I am satiated with honour, and my health is so broken, that I must implore you to give me a successor.—I can no longer sit on horseback; my courage alone is unshaken. *Every thing was ready for the explosion at Genoa*; but Foyoult thought it expedient to delay. We must conciliate Genoa till the new order of things is more firmly established."—*Confident. Despatches* Oct. 8, 1796, ii. 92, 93.

his career of success, but rendered an immediate retreat on the part of the whole Republican army unavoidable.

In obedience to the orders he had received, that general, on the same day on which the Austrians crossed the Piave, commenced an attack on their position on the Lavis; but he was not only received with the utmost intrepidity, but worsted in the encounter, and his forces having fallen into confusion in the course of their retreat through the narrow valley, he was driven back in disorder, through the town of Trent, to the defile of Calliano, with the loss of four thousand men. There he made a stand; but Davidovich, having caused a large part of his forces to cross to the right bank of the Adige, passed that post, and was moving rapidly down on Montebaldo and Rivoli, so as to threaten his communications with Verona, and the remainder of the army. Nothing was left for Vaubois but to retire in haste towards Verona, which was seriously menaced by the increasing forces of the Tyrolese army; while their progress on the Montebaldo could only be arrested by bringing up Joubert in the utmost haste from the lines of Mantua.¹

No sooner was this disastrous intelligence received by Napoleon than he drew back his whole force through Vicenza to Verona; while Alvinzi, who was himself preparing to retire, after his check on the preceding day, immediately resumed the offensive. Napoleon in person proceeded, with such troops as he could collect, in the utmost haste to the Montebaldo, where he found the division of Vaubois all assembled on the plateau of Rivoli, and so much reinforced as to be able to withstand an attack. He here deemed it necessary to make a severe example of the regiments whose panic had so nearly proved fatal to the army. Collecting the troops into a circle, he addressed them, with a severe tone, in these words—"Soldiers, I am displeased with you. You have evinced neither discipline, nor valour, nor constancy. You have allowed yourselves to be chased from positions where a handful of resolute men might have arrested an army. Soldiers of the 39th and 85th, you are no longer French soldiers. Chief of the staff, cause it to be written on their standards, *They are no longer of the Army of Italy.*" These terrible words, pronounced with a menac-

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123.

Defeat of
Vaubois by
the Imperi-
alists
Nov. 1.

1 Nap. iti.
348, 349.
Th. viii.
453, 455.
Vict. et
Corq. vii.
187, 189.

124.

Napoleon
hastens in
person to
the plateau
of Rivoli.

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¹ Nap. iii.
350. Th.
viii. 457.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
191-193.

125.
Returns to
Caldiero,
and is there
defeated.

Nov. 11.

² Nap. iii.
353. Th.
viii. 457.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
194, 195.

ing voice, filled these brave regiments with consternation. The laws of discipline could not restrain the sounds of grief which burst from their ranks. They broke their array, and, crowding round the general, entreated that he would lead them into action, and give them an opportunity of showing whether they were not of the army of Italy. Napoleon consoled them by some kind expressions, and, feigning to yield to their prayers, promised to suspend the order. A few days after, they behaved with uncommon gallantry, and regained their place in his esteem.¹

Notwithstanding his check on the Brenta, the operations of Alvinzi had hitherto been crowned with the most brilliant success. He had regained possession of the whole of the Italian Tyrol, and of all the plain of Italy between that river and the Adige. But the most difficult part still remained, which was to pass the latter stream in the face of the enemy, and effect a junction with the right wing, under Davidovich, which had achieved such important advantages. He followed the retiring columns of the Republicans, who took a position on the heights of Caldiero, determined to defend the road to Verona to the very uttermost. Napoleon arrived there from the Montebaldo, on the evening of the 10th, and resolved to attack Alvinzi on the following day, who had occupied a strong position directly in front, his left resting on the marshes of Arcola, and his right on the heights of CALDIERO and the village of Colognola. Massena was directed to attack the right, which appeared the most accessible, and his advanced guard succeeded in ascending an eminence, surmounted by a mill, which the Austrian general had neglected to occupy; but the Imperialists, returning in force, regained the post, and made the brigade prisoners. The action continued the remainder of the day along the whole line, without decisive success to either party; but the rain, which fell in torrents, and the mud which clogged their wheels, prevented the French artillery from being brought up to meet the fire of the Austrian cannon, which, in position, thundered with terrible effect upon the Republican columns. Wearied and dispirited, they drew back at night, yielding, for the first time in the campaign, the victory in a pitched battle to their enemies.²

The situation of Napoleon was now, to all appearance,

utterly desperate. He had been weakened by the loss of four thousand men under Vaubois, and three thousand in the recent actions with Alvinzi; his troops, dispirited by these disasters, had lost much of their confidence and courage, and a depressing feeling of the great strength of the enemy had entered every breast. The army, it was true, had still the advantage of a central position at Verona, in the midst of their enemies; but they could resume the offensive in no direction with any appearance of success. In the north they were arrested by the defiles of the Tyrol; in the east by the position of Caldiero, known by recent experience to be impregnable; in the south the blockading force was hardly able to make head against the frequent sorties of the garrison of Mantua. The peril of their situation was rapidly and fully perceived by the French soldiers, more capable than any others in Europe of judging of the probable course of events, and extremely susceptible of strong impressions; and it required all the art of the general, aided by the eloquence of his lieutenants, to hinder them from sinking under their misfortunes. Napoleon wrote in the most desponding terms to the Directory, but in public he assumed the appearance of confidence; and the wounded in the city, hearing of the peril of the army, began to issue, with their wounds yet unhealed, from the hospitals.¹*

But the genius of Napoleon did not desert him in this eventful crisis. Without communicating his design to any one, he ordered the whole army to be under arms at night-fall, on the 14th November, and they began their march in three columns, crossed the Adige and took the road to

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1796.

126.

Perilous
situation of
Napoleon.

1 Th. viii.
458, 460.
Nap. iii.
356, 357.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
195, 196.

127.
His new
designs..

* The gloomy anticipations of Napoleon at this period are strongly depicted in the following interesting secret despatch to the Directory:—"If the events I have to recount are not propitious, you will not ascribe it to the army; its inferiority, and the exhaustion of its brave men, give me every reason to fear for it. Perhaps we are on the eve of losing Italy. None of the promised succours have arrived; they are all arrested at Lyons or Marseilles. The activity of our government at the commencement of the war can alone give you an idea of the energy of the Court of Vienna; hardly a day elapses that they do not receive five thousand men, and for two months I have only been joined by a single battalion. I do my duty; the army does its part; my soul is lacerated, but my conscience is at ease. I never received a fourth part of the succours which the Minister of War announces in his despatches.

"To-day I shall allow the troops to repose; but to-morrow we shall renew our operations. I despair of preventing the raising the blockade of Mantua; should that disaster arrive, we shall soon be behind the Adda, if not over the Alps. The wounded are few, but they are the *élite* of the army. Our best officers are struck down; the army of Italy, reduced to a

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Milan. The hour of departure, the route, the universal ignorance in regard to their destination, all inspired the belief that they were about to retreat, and relinquish to their insulting rivals the plains of Italy. Breathless with anxiety, the troops defiled through the gates of Verona; not a word was spoken in the ranks; grief filled every heart; in the dark columns, the measured tread of marching men alone was heard; when suddenly the order was given to turn rapidly to the left, and all the corps, descending the course of the Adige, arrived before daybreak at Ronco. There they found a bridge of boats prepared, and the whole army was rapidly passed to the other side, and found itself in an immense sea of morasses. A general feeling of joy was immediately diffused over the army: the soldiers now perceived that the contest for Italy was not abandoned, and, passing quickly from one extreme to another, prepared with alacrity to follow the footsteps of their leader, without any regard to the fearful odds to which they were exposed.¹

¹ Th. viii.
461. Nap.
iii. 357.

128.
He moves
down the
Adige, to
turn the
position of
Caldiero by
Arcola.

Having perceived, during the former action at Caldiero, that the position was too strong to be carried by an attack in front, Napoleon had resolved to assail it in flank, by the village of ARCOLA, and for that purpose placed his army in the midst of the morasses, which stretched from thence to the banks of the Po. He thought with reason, that, on the narrow causeways which traversed these marshes, the superiority of numbers on the part of the enemy would be unavailing; every thing would come to depend on the resolution of the heads of columns; and he hoped that the courage of his soldiers, restored by being

handful of heroes, is exhausted. The heroes of Lodi, of Millesimo, of Castiglione, of Bassano, are dead, or in hospital; there remains only their reputation, and the pride they have given to the soldiers. Joubert, Lanusse, Victor, Murat, Charlot, are wounded: we are abandoned in the extremity of Italy.

"I have lost few soldiers, but those who have fallen are the flower of the army, whom it is impossible to replace. Such as remain have devoted themselves to death. Perhaps the hour of the brave Augereau, of the intrepid Massena, of Berthier, is about to strike; what, then, will become of these brave soldiers? This consideration renders me circumspect; I know not how to brave death, when it would so certainly be the ruin of those who have so long been the object of my solicitude.

"In a few days we shall make a last effort; should fortune prove favourable, we shall take Mantua, and with it Italy. Had I received the 85d, three thousand five hundred strong, I would have answered for every thing: in a few days forty thousand men will perhaps not give me the same security."

—*Confidential Dispatch*, 14th Nov. ii. 246-251.

thus brought to combat on equal terms with the enemy, and animated by this novel species of warfare, would prevail over the discipline and ténacity of the Germans. The position which he had chosen was singularly well adapted for the purpose in view. Three *chaussées* branch off from Ronco ; one following the left bank of the Adige, remounts that river to Verona ; one in the centre leads straight to Arcola, by a stone bridge over the little stream of the Alpon ; the third, on the right, follows the descending course of the Adige to Albaredo. Three columns were moved forward on these *chaussées* ; that on the left was destined to approach Verona, and observe that town so as to secure it from any sudden attack of the enemy ; that in the centre, to attack the flank of their position by the village of Arcola ; that on the right, to cut off their retreat.¹

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¹ Nap. iii.
358, 360.
Th. viii. 462,
463. Per-
sonal obser-
vation.

At daybreak, on the 15th, Massena advanced on the first *chaussée* as far as a small eminence, which brought him in sight of the steeples of Verona, and removed all anxiety in that quarter, as to the ultimate destination of the troops. Augereau, with the division in the centre, pushed, without being perceived, to the bridge of Arcola ; but his advanced guard was there met by three battalions of Croats, who kept up so heavy a fire on the head of the column, that, notwithstanding the greatest exertions on the part of the soldiers, they were driven back. In vain Augereau himself hastened to the spot, and led them back to the charge : the fire at the bridge was so violent, that he was arrested, and compelled to halt the column. Meanwhile, Alvinzi, whose attention was fixed on Verona, where he imagined the bulk of the enemy's forces to be, was confounded in the morning at hearing a violent fire in the marshes. At first he imagined that it was merely a few light troops, but soon intelligence arrived from all quarters that the enemy were advancing in force on all the dikes, and threatened the flank and the rear of his position. He immediately dispatched two divisions along the *chaussées* by which the enemy was approaching ; that commanded by Mitrowski advanced to defend the village of Arcola, while that under Provera marched against the division of Massena. The latter column soon commenced an attack on their antagonists, but they were unable to

129.
Dreadful ac-
tions there.
15th Nov.

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Conq. vii.
196, 198.
Nap. iii. 361,
362. Th.
viii. 463, 465.

130.
Heroic
courage of
Napoleon—
both parties
retire at
night.

withstand the impetuous shock of Massena's grenadiers, and were driven back with heavy loss. Mitrouski, at the same time, passed through Arcola, crossed the bridge, and attacked the corps of Augereau; but they also were repulsed and followed to the bridge by the victorious French. There commenced a desperate struggle; the Republican column advanced with the utmost intrepidity, but they were received with so tremendous a fire from the artillery in front, and a line of infantry stationed along the banks of the Alpon in flank, that they staggered and fell back.¹

Napoleon, deeming the possession of Arcola indispensable not only to his future operations, but to the safety of his own army, put himself with his generals at the head of the column, seized a standard, advanced without shrinking through a tempest of shot, and planted it on the middle of the bridge; but the fire there became so violent that his grenadiers hesitated, and, seizing the general in their arms, bore him back amidst a cloud of smoke, the dead and the dying, and, to prevent his being made prisoner, hid him among some alder bushes in the morass on the side of the road. The Austrians instantly rushed over the bridge, and pushed the crowd of fugitives into the marsh, where Napoleon lay up to the middle in water, while the enemy's soldiers for a minute surrounded him on all sides. The French grenadiers soon perceived that their commander was left behind; the cry ran through their ranks, "Forward to save the General!" and, returning to the charge, they drove back the Austrians, and extricated Napoleon from his perilous situation. During this terrible strife, Lannes received three wounds. His aide-de-camp, Meuron, was killed by his side, when covering his general with his body, and almost all his personal staff were badly wounded. Meanwhile Guieux, who commanded the column which had been moved against Albaredo, had arrived at that place, and was directly in rear of the village of Arcola; but it was too late. During the desperate stand there made by the Austrians, Alvinzi had gained time to draw off his baggage and artillery, and it was no longer possible to take the enemy in rear. Towards evening, the Austrians abandoned Arcola, and drew up their army, facing the marshes, at the foot of the

heights of Caldiero. In the night, Napoleon, on his side, withdrew his forces to the right bank of the Adige, leaving only an advanced guard on the left bank; while the Austrians re-occupied the village of Arcola, and all the ground which had been so vehemently disputed on the preceding day. They even advanced, in the confidence of victory, along the dikes, to within six hundred yards of the village of Ronco; but when they were thus far engaged in the defiles, the French attacked them with the bayonet, and drove back their columns, after an obstinate engagement, to the vicinity of Arcola. The battle continued the whole day with various success, and at nightfall both parties retired, the Austrians over the Alpon, the Republicans across the Adige.¹

During the whole of these eventful days, big with the fate of Italy and the world, the conduct of the Austrian generals was timid, and unworthy of the brave troops whom they commanded. Davidovich, while the contest was raging on the lower Adige, remained in total inactivity on the upper part of that stream; while Alvinzi, fettered by secret instructions from the Aulic Council to attempt nothing hazardous, and rather keep on the defensive, in order to facilitate the secret negotiations which were going forward or about to commence, repeatedly halted in the career of success, and lost the fairest opportunities of crushing his adversary. Napoleon, aware, from the treachery which constantly prevailed at the Imperial headquarters, of these secret restrictions, augmented the irresolution of the commander-in-chief by privately dispatching intelligence from Verona to him of the approaching mission of Clarke to conduct negotiations for peace, of the conferences opened at Paris with England, and the probability of an immediate accommodation. Alvinzi rejected the proposal for an armistice which he made, but suspended his movements to join Davidovich, and paralysed every successful operation for fear of injuring the negotiations. To such a length did this timidity proceed, that when, after the repulse of the French from Arcola, his bravest officers besought him instantly to form a junction with Davidovich, and terminate the war by a general attack on Verona; instead of following the heroic advice, he retired towards Vicenza.²

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1796.
16th Nov.

Nap. iii.
363, 367.
Th. viii. 467,
468. Vict.
et Conq. vii.
200, 203.
O'Meara, i.
216, and ii.
226.

131.
Timid conduct of the Austrian generals.

² Hard. iv.
67, 75.

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1796.

132.

Renewal of

the battle.

17th Nov. 1796.

Again the sun rose on this dreadful scene of carnage, and both parties advanced, with diminished numbers but undecaying fury, to the struggle which was to decide the fate of Italy. They met in the middle of the dikes, and fought with the utmost animosity. The French column in the centre was routed, and driven back so far, that the Austrian balls fell upon the bridge of Ronco, where the action was restored by a regiment which Napoleon had placed in ambuscade among the willows on the side of the road, and which attacked the victorious column in flank, when disordered by success, with such vigour, that they were almost all driven into the marshes. Massena, on his side, experienced similar vicissitudes, and was only enabled to keep his ground by placing himself at the head of the column, and leading the soldiers on with his hat on the point of his sword. Towards noon, however, Napoleon perceiving that the enemy were exhausted with fatigue, while his own soldiers were comparatively fresh, deemed the moment for decisive success arrived, and ordered a general charge of all his forces along both *chaussées*; and having cleared them of the enemy, formed his troops in order of battle at their extremity, on the firm ground, having the right towards Porto Legnago and the left at Arcola. By orders of the French general, the garrison of that place issued forth with four pieces of cannon, so as to take the enemy in rear; while a body of trumpeters was sent, under cover of the willows, to their extreme left flank, with orders to sound a charge, as soon as the action was fully engaged along the whole line. These measures were completely successful. The Austrian commander, while bravely resisting in front, hearing a cannonade in his rear, and the trumpets of a whole division of cavalry in his flank, ordered a retreat, and, after a desperate struggle of three days' duration, yielded the victory to his enemies. Alvinzi had stationed eight thousand men in echelon along his line of retreat, so that he was enabled to retire in good order, and with very little further loss. It was so apparent to all the Austrian army that this last retreat was the result of a secret understanding with the French general, and with a view to the negotiation which was now depending, that they openly and loudly expressed their indignation. One colonel broke his sword in

pieces, and declared he would no longer serve under a commander whose conduct brought disgrace on his troops. Certain it is, that Alvinzi, during this dreadful strife at Arcola, had neither evinced the capacity nor the spirit of a general worthy to combat with Napoleon;—not that he was in reality deficient in either, but that the ruinous restrictions of the Aulic Council paralysed all his movements; and the dread of hazarding any thing on the issue of a negotiation, made him throw away every chance of success.¹

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1796.

¹ Hard. iv.
71, 77. Nap.
iii. 368, 369.
Th. viii. 44.
478. Journ.
ix. 172, 192.

While this desperate struggle was going forward in the marshes of Arcola, Davidovich, who had opened the campaign with such brilliant success, was far from following up his advantages with the vigour which might have been expected. He merely advanced with his forces to the neighbourhood of Verona on the 18th, following Vaubois, who abandoned the positions of Corona and Rivoli on his approach; whereas, had he pressed him hard on the preceding days, Napoleon would have been compelled to cross the Adige, and raise the siege of Mantua. Without losing an instant, the French general returned with a large part of his forces through Verona, and compelled Davidovich to retire into the Tyrol, while the French resumed their old positions at Corona and Rivoli; and Augereau drove them from Dolce, with the loss of one thousand prisoners and nine pieces of cannon. The inhabitants of that town were lost in astonishment when they beheld the army which had left their walls by the gate of Milan three days before, return in triumph, after so terrible a combat, by the gate of Venice; and, without halting, pass through the town to make head against the fresh enemies who approached from the Tyrol. Alvinzi, when Napoleon was absent in pursuit of Davidovich, advanced towards Verona, now chiefly occupied by invalids and wounded men, and a universal joy pervaded the army when the order to march in that direction was given; but his old irresolution soon returned; the instructions of the Aulic Council prevailed over his better genius, and the final order to retire to Vicenza again spread grief and despair among his heroic followers.²

133.
Feeble operations of
Davidovich.

Nov. 18.

² Hard. iv.
75. Nap.
iii. 371.
Th. viii.
472.

The results of the battle of Arcola, how glorious soever to the French arms, were by no means so decisive as those

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1796.

134.
Results of
these ac-
tions.1 Jom. ix.
231. Nap.
iii. 371, 372.
Th. viii. 472.
473. Vict. et
Conq. vii.
208, 212.135.
Extraordi-
nary Joy at
Paris.2 Th. viii.
473.136.
Vast efforts
of the Aus-
trians.

of the previous victories gained in the campaign. The actions had been most obstinately contested; and though the Imperialists ultimately retired, and Mantua was unrelieved, yet the victors were nearly as much weakened as the vanquished. The loss of the French in all, including the actions with Davidovich, was fifteen thousand men, while that of the Austrians did not exceed eighteen thousand. During the confusion consequent on such desperate engagements, the garrison of Mantua made frequent sorties; and Wurmser availed himself with such skill of the temporary interruption of the blockade, that considerable convoys of provisions were introduced into the place, and, by putting the garrison on half rations, and calculating on the great mortality among the troops, which daily diminished their number, he still had hopes that he could maintain his position till a fourth effort was made for his relief.¹

The intelligence of these hard-fought victories excited the most enthusiastic transports throughout all France. The battle of Arcola especially, with its desperate chances and perilous passages, was the object of universal admiration. The people were never weary of celebrating the genius which had selected, amidst the dikes of Ronco, a field of battle where numbers were unavailing and courage irresistible; and of admiring the heroic intrepidity which made the soldier forget the general, and recalled the exploits of the knights of romance. Every where medals were exhibited of the young general on the bridge of Arcola, with the standard in his hand, in the midst of the fire and smoke. The Councils decreed that the army of Italy had deserved well of their country, and that the standards which Napoleon and Augereau had borne on that memorable occasion, should be given to them, to be preserved as precious trophies in their families.²

Nor were the Austrians less distinguished by patriotic feeling. When the triumphs of the Archduke Charles on the Danube had saved Germany, and raised to the highest pitch the ardour of the people, the reverses in Italy came to damp the general joy, and renew, in a quarter where it was least expected, the peril of the monarchy. With unconquerable resolution they prepared to face the danger; the affectionate ardour of the hereditary states showed

itself in the moment of alarm ; the people every where flew to arms ; numerous battalions of volunteers were formed to repair the chasms in the regular forces ; Vienna alone raised four regiments, which received standards embroidered by the hand of the Empress ; and, before the end of the year, a fourth army was formed in the mountains of Friuli and Tyrol, not inferior either in numbers or resolution to those which had wasted away under the sword of Napoleon.¹

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1796.

¹ Toul. vi.
142. Jom.
ix. 267.
Hard. iv.

After the battle of Arcole, the negotiation, the commencement of which had been attended with such fatal effects to the Imperial fortunes during the action, was continued with the greatest activity between the headquarters of the two armies. General Clarke, the republican envoy, arrived at the headquarters of Napoleon, and it was at first proposed to conclude an armistice of three months, in order to facilitate the negotiations ; but this the French general, who saw the command of Italy on the point of slipping from his grasp, and was well aware that the fate of the war depended on Mantua, resolutely opposed.* Clarke, however, continued to argue in favour of the armistice, and produced the instructions of his government, which were precise on that point ; but Napoleon, secure of the support of Barras, at once let him know that he was resolved not to share his authority with any one. " If you come here to obey me," said he, " I will always see you with pleasure ; if not, the sooner you return to those who sent you the better."²

137.
Mission of
Clarke to
negotiate
for peace.

² Hard. iv.
133, 134.

Clarke felt he was mastered ; he did not answer a word : from that moment the negotiation fell entirely into the hands of Napoleon, and came to nothing. So completely, indeed, did the republican envoy fall under the government of the young general, that he himself wrote to the Directory—" It is indispensable that the general-in-chief

138,
Which is
thwarted by
Napoleon.

* " Masters of Mantua," said he, " the enemy will be too happy to leave us the line of the Rhine. But if an armistice is concluded, we must abandon that fortress till May, and then find it completely provisioned, so that its fall cannot be reckoned on before the unhealthy months of autumn. We will lose the money (30,000,000) we expect from Rome, which cannot be influenced but by the fall of Mantua : and the Emperor, being nearer the scene of action, will recruit his army much more effectually than we can, and in the opening of the campaign we shall be inferior to the enemy. Fifteen days' repose is of essential service to the army of Italy ; three months would ruin it. To conclude an armistice just now, is to cut ourselves out of all chance of success—in a word, every thing depends on the fall of Mantua."—*Corresp. Confid.* ii. 423.

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¹ Report,
Dec. 1796,
by Clarke,
Confid.
Corresp.

should conduct all the diplomatic operations in Italy ;"¹ and thenceforth his attention was almost entirely confined to arresting the scandalous depredations of the civil and military authorities, both on the Italian states and the funds of the Republic ; an employment which soon absorbed all his time, and was attended with as little success as the attempts of Napoleon himself had been. The conferences which were opened at Vicenza in December, were broken up on the 3d January, without having led to any result ; and both parties prepared to try once more the fate of arms. For two months after the battle of Arcola, and during this negotiation, both parties remained in a state of inactivity, and great efforts were made on either side to recruit the armies for the final contest which was approaching. Napoleon received considerable reinforcements ; numbers of the sick were discharged from the hospitals, and rejoined their ranks on the approach of the cold weather, and ten thousand men flocked to his standards from the interior ;² so that, by the beginning of January 1797, he had forty-six thousand men under arms. Ten thousand blockaded Mantua, and the remainder of the army was on the line of the Adige, from the edge of the Po to the rocks of Montebaldo.²

² Jom. ix.
262. Th.
viii. 507.
Hard. iv.
136, 149.

139.
Distress of
Mantua.

It was high time that the Imperialists should advance to the relief of this fortress, which was now reduced to the last extremity from want of provisions. At a council of war, held in the end of December, it was decided that it was indispensable that instant intelligence should be sent to Alvinzi of their desperate situation. An English officer attached to the garrison volunteered to perform in person the perilous mission, which he executed with equal courage and address. He set out, disguised as a peasant, from Mantua, on the 29th December, at nightfall, in the midst of a deep fall of snow, eluded the vigilance of the French patrols, and, after surmounting a thousand hardships and dangers, arrived at the headquarters of Alvinzi, at Bassano, on the 4th January, the day after the conferences at Vicenza were broken up. Great destinies awaited this enterprising officer. He was Colonel GRAHAM,* afterwards victor at Barrosa, and the first British General who planted the English standard on the soil of France.³

³ Hard. iv.
153, 154.

* Now Lord Lynedoch.

The Austrian plan of attack on this occasion was materially different from what it had formerly been. Adhering still to their favourite system of dividing their forces, and being masters of the course of the Brenta from Bassano to Roveredo, they transferred the bulk of their troops to the Upper Adige, where Alvinzi himself took the command of thirty-five thousand men. A subordinate force of fifteen thousand was destined to advance by the plain of Padua to Mantua, with a view to raise the siege, extricate Wurmser, and push on to the Ecclesiastical States, where the Pope had recently been making great preparations, and from whose levies it was hoped the numerous staff and dismounted dragoons of the veteran marshal would form an efficient force. This project had every appearance of success ; but, unfortunately, it became known to the French general, from the despatches which announced it to Wurmser, falling into his hands as the messenger who bore them was on the point of clearing the last lines of the blockade of Mantua.¹

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1797.

140.

They make
a fourth
effort to
relieve
Mantua.

¹ Nap. iii.
408, 409.

On the 12th January 1797, the advanced guard of Alvinzi attacked the Republican posts on the Montebaldo, and forced them back to the plateau of Rivoli ; while, on the same day, the troops in the plain pushed forward, drove in all the French videttes towards Porto Legnago, and maintained a desultory fire along the whole line of the Lower Adige. For some time Napoleon was uncertain on which side the principal attack would be made ; but soon the alarming accounts of the great display of force on the upper part of the river, and the secret intelligence which he received from treachery at the Austrian headquarters, left no doubt that the enemy's principal forces were accumulated near Rivoli ; and accordingly he set out with the whole centre of his army to support Joubert, who was there struggling with immensely superior forces. He arrived at two in the morning on the plateau of RIVOLI. The weather was clear and beautiful ; an unclouded moon silvered the fir-clad precipices of the mountains ; but the horizon to the northward was illuminated by the fires of innumerable bivouacs, and from the neighbouring heights his experienced eye could discover the lights of nearly forty thousand men. This great force was divided into five columns, which filled the whole space between the

141.

They ad-
vance to
Rivoli.
12th Jan.
1797.

14th Jan.

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Adige and the lake of Guarda ; the principal one, under Quasdanovich, composed of all the artillery, cavalry, and a strong body of grenadiers, followed the high-road on the right, and was destined to ascend the plateau by the zigzag and steep ascent which led to its summit. Three other corps of infantry received orders to climb the amphitheatre of mountains which surrounded it in front, and, when the action was engaged on the high-road, descend upon the French army ; while a fifth, under Lusignan, was directed to wind round the base of the plateau, gain the high-road in the rear, and cut off their retreat to Verona. The plan was ably conceived, and had nearly succeeded ; with a general of inferior ability to Napoleon, and troops of less resolution than his army, it unquestionably would have done so.¹

¹ Th. viii.
513. Nap.
iii. 414.
Jom. ix.
275.

142.
Force of the
French.

² Th. viii.
514. Nap.
iii. 414.
Jom. ix. 276.
Vict. et
Conq. viii.
34, 37.

143.
Battle of
Rivoli.
14th Jan.

To oppose this formidable force, Napoleon had only thirty thousand men, but he had the advantage of being in position on a plain, elevated among the mountains, while his adversaries must necessarily be fatigued in endeavouring to reach it ; and he had sixty pieces of cannon, and a numerous body of cavalry, in excellent condition. He immediately perceived that it was necessary, at all hazards, to keep his ground on the plateau ; and, by so doing, he hoped to prevent the junction of the enemy's masses, and overthrow them separately, as they were toiling up the steep to commence the attack. Before daybreak he moved forward the tirailleurs of Joubert, to drive back the advanced posts of the Imperialists, who had already ascended to the plateau, and, by the light of the moon, arranged his whole force with admirable precision on its summit.²

The action began at nine o'clock, by the Austrian columns, which descended from the semicircular heights of the Montebaldo, attacking the French left. After a desperate resistance, the regiments stationed there were broken, and fled in disorder ; upon which Napoleon galloped to the village of Rivoli, where the division of Massena, which had marched all night, was reposing from its fatigues, led it to the front, and, by a vigorous charge, restored the combat in that quarter. This check, however, had forced Joubert on the right to give ground ; the divisions in front pressed down upon the plateau, while at the same instant the head of the column of the Imperial grena-

diers appeared at the top of the zigzag windings of the high-road, having, by incredible efforts of valour, forced that perilous ascent, and their cavalry and artillery began to debouche upon the level surface at its summit. Meanwhile, the Division of Lusignan, which had wound unperceived round the flanks of the Republicans, appeared directly in their rear, and the Imperial soldiers, deeming the destruction of the French army certain, gave loud cheers on all sides, which were re-echoed from the surrounding cliffs, and clapped their hands, as they successively took up their ground. The Republicans, attacked in front, flank, and rear at the same time, saw their retreat cut off, and no resource from the bayonets of the Austrians, but in the precipices of the Alps.¹

At this perilous moment, the presence of mind of Napoleon did not forsake him. He instantly, in order to gain time, sent a flag of truce to Alvinzi, proposing a suspension of arms for half an hour, as he had some propositions to make in consequence of the arrival of a courier with despatches from Paris. The Austrian general, ever acting on the idea so unhappily impressed on all its officers by the Imperial Government, that military were to be subordinate to diplomatic operations, fell into the snare; the suspension, at the critical moment, was agreed to; and the march of the Austrians was arrested at the very moment when the soldiers, with loud shouts, were exclaiming—"We have them; we have them!" Junot repaired to the Austrian headquarters, from whence, after a conference of an hour, he returned, as might have been expected, without having come to any accommodation: but meanwhile the critical period had passed; Napoleon had gained time to face the danger, and made the movements requisite to repel these numerous attacks. Joubert, with the light infantry, was ordered to face about on the extreme right to oppose Quasdanovich; while Leclerc and Lasalle, with the light cavalry and flying artillery, flew to the menaced point on the left; and a regiment of infantry was directed to the heights of Tiffaro, to make head against the corps of Lusignan. Far from being disconcerted by the appearance of the troops in his rear, he exclaimed, pointing to them, "These are already our prisoners;" and the confident tone in which he spoke soon communicated itself

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1797.

1 Nap. iii.
416. Th.
viii. 516.
Jom. viii.
279. Vict.
et Conq.
viii. 38, 40.

144.

Extreme
danger of
Napoleon,
and his
stratagem
to avoid
destruction.

CHAP.

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1797.

¹ Jom. viii.
282, 283.
Th. viii. 518.
Nap. iii. 416.
Vict. et
Conq. viii.
42, 44.

145.
Decisive
victory of
Napoleon.

² Th. viii.
518, 519.
Jom. viii.
283, 284.
Nap. iii. 417.
Vict. et
Conq. viii.
44, 45.

to the soldiers, who repeated the cheering expression. The head of Quasdanovich's division, which had so bravely won the ascent, received in front by a terrible fire of grape shot, charged on one flank by Lasalle's horse, and exposed on the other to a close discharge of musketry from Joubert, broke and staggered backwards down the steep. The fugitives, rushing headlong through the column which was toiling up, soon threw the whole into inextricable confusion; horse, foot, and cannon struggled together, under a plunging fire from the French batteries, which blew up some ammunition-waggons, and produced a scene of frightful disorder. No sooner was the plateau delivered from this flank attack, than Napoleon accumulated his forces on the troops which had descended from the semi-circle of the Montebaldo, and that gallant band, destitute of artillery, and deprived now of the expected aid from the corps in flank, soon gave way, and fled in confusion to the mountains, where great numbers were made prisoners.¹

During these decisive successes, the division of Lusignan had gained ground on the troops opposed to it, and came to the heights in rear of the army, in time to witness the destruction of the three divisions in the mountains. From that moment they foresaw their own fate. The victorious troops were speedily directed against this brave division, now insulated from all support, and depressed by the ruin which it had witnessed in the other parts of the army. For some time they stood firm; but the fire of fifteen pieces of heavy artillery, to which they had nothing to oppose, at length compelled them to retreat; and, before they had receded far, they met the division of Rey, the reserve of Massena, which was approaching. Such was the consternation produced by this unexpected apparition, that the whole division laid down its arms; while Quasdanovich, now left to his own resources, retired up the valley of the Adige, and the broken remains of the centre divisions sought refuge behind the rocky bed of the Tasso.²

Not content with these splendid triumphs, Napoleon, on the very night in which they were gained, flew to the assistance of the troops on the Lower Adige, with part of the division of Massena, which had marched all the pre-

coding night, and fought on the following day. It was full time that he should do so, for on the very day on which the battle of Rivoli was fought, Provera had forced the passage of the Adige at Anghiara, and marched between Augereau and the blockading force by Sanguenetto to the neighbourhood of Mantua, of which he threatened to raise the siege on the following morning. Augereau, it is true, had collected his forces, attacked the rear-guard of the Austrians during their march, and taken fifteen hundred prisoners and fourteen pieces of cannon; but still the peril was imminent that the main body of Provera's forces would gain the fort of St George, an outwork of Mantua, and put the blockading force between two fires. Fully aware of the danger, Napoleon marched all night and the whole of the following day, and arrived in the evening in the neighbourhood of Mantua.¹

Meanwhile the hussars of Hohenzollern presented themselves, at sunrise on the 15th, at the gate of Fort St George, and being dressed in white cloaks, were nearly mistaken for a regiment of French, and admitted within the walls. But the error having been discovered by an old sergeant who was cutting wood near the gate, the drawbridge was suddenly drawn up, and the alarm communicated to the garrison. Hohenzollern advanced at the gallop, but before he could get in the gates were closed, and a discharge of grape-shot repulsed the assailants. All that day, the garrison under Miollis combated on the ramparts, and gave time for the succours from Rivoli to arrive. Provera sent a boat across the lake to warn Wurmser of his approach, and concert a general attack, on the next day, upon the blockading force; and in pursuance of the summons, the brave veteran presented himself at the trenches on the following morning with a large part of the garrison. But the arrival of Napoleon not only frustrated all these preparations, but proved fatal to the Austrian division. During the night he pushed forward four regiments, which he had brought with him, between the forts of La Favorite and St George, so as to prevent Wurmser from effecting a junction with the Imperialists, who approached to raise the siege, and strengthened Serrurier at the former point, in order to enable him to repel any attack from the garrison. At daybreak, the battle commenced at all points.

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146.

He hastens
to the Lower
Adige.

15th Jan.

1 Jom. viii.

290 Th.

viii. 520.

Vict. et

Conq. viii.

49, 50.

147.

Operations
of Provera
there, who
is forced to
surrender.

16th Jan.

CHAP.

XX.

1797.

¹ Th. viii.
521. Nap.
iii. 421.
Jom. viii.
290, 293.
Vict. et
Conq. viii.
50, 54.

Wurmser, after an obstinate conflict, was thrown back into the fortress; while Provera, surrounded by superior forces, and tracked in all its doublings, like a furious stag by ruthless hunters, was compelled to lay down his arms, with six thousand men. In this engagement the 57th regiment acquired the surname of the *Terrible*, from the fury with which it threw itself on the Austrian line. It was commanded by VICTOR, afterwards Duke of Belluno, and one of the most distinguished marshals of the French empire.^{1*}

148.
Results of
these
battles.

Thus, in three days, by his admirable dispositions, and the extraordinary activity of his troops, did Napoleon not only defeat two Austrian armies of much greater force, taken together, than his own, but took from them eighteen thousand prisoners, twenty-four standards, and sixty pieces of cannon. Such was the loss of the enemy besides, in killed and wounded, that the Imperialists were totally disabled from keeping the field, and the French left in undisputed possession of the whole peninsula. History has few examples to exhibit of successes so decisive, achieved by forces so inconsiderable. In their report on these disasters, the Aulic Council generously threw no blame on Alvinzi, but openly avowed the treachery at their headquarters, which made all their designs known before they were carried into execution. "The chief fatality," said they, "consisted in this, that our designs were constantly made known to the enemy before they were acted upon. Treachery rendered abortive the combina-

Early history
of Victor.

* Perrin Victor, afterwards Duke of Belluno, was born at La Marche in Lorraine, in 1766, of humble parents. At the age of fifteen he entered the artillery; but it was not till the period of the Revolution that he obtained any rapid advancement. In 1793 he was with his regiment at the siege of Toulon, where he attracted the notice of Napoleon by the skill and precision with which the fire of his pieces was maintained; and, by his recommendation, he was made a general of brigade. He was twice wounded during the siege: but, having recovered from these injuries, he received a command in the following year in the army of the Eastern Pyrenees, and bore a distinguished part in the sieges of Saint Elme and Rôsas, and in all the actions which took place in that quarter, till the Treaty of Bâle terminated the war with the Spanish monarchy. Being then transferred to the army of Italy, he commanded a brigade at the battle of Loano in autumn 1795, and acquired distinction at the battle of Dego under Napoleon: but his first great exploit was in the actions against Provera at La Favorite and St George, where his skill in combination, and vehemence of attack, compelled that general to surrender with six thousand men. In 1804 he was made a marshal of the empire; and he bore a prominent part in all the campaigns of Napoleon, down to his fall in 1814.—See *Biographie des Contemporains*, xx. 193, 194 (VICTOR).

tions of Marshal Wurmser for the relief of Mantua: treachery plunged Alvinzi into all his misfortunes. General Buonaparte himself says in his report, that from different sources he had become acquainted with the designs of the enemy before their execution; and, on the last occasion, it was only on the 4th January that Alvinzi received his instructions for the attack, and on the 2d January it was published by Buonaparte in the *Gazette of Milan*. Alvinzi, notwithstanding his disasters, was continued in favour; but Provera was exiled to his estates in Carinthia, upon the ground that he had transgressed his orders in advancing against Mantua before he had received intelligence of the progress of Alvinzi.¹

This was the last effort of which Austria was capable, and the immediate consequence of its defeat was the complete subjugation of the peninsula. The remains of Alvinzi's corps retired in opposite directions; one part towards Trent, and another towards Bassano. Napoleon, whose genius never appeared so strongly as in pursuing the remains of a beaten army, followed them up without intermission. Loudon, who had taken post at Roveredo, with eight thousand men, in order to defend as long as possible the valley of the Upper Adige, was driven by Joubert successively from that town and Trent, with the loss of five hundred prisoners; while Massena, by a rapid march over the mountains, made himself master of Primolano, descended into the gorges of the Val Sugana, turned the position of Bassano, and drove the Austrians, with a loss of a thousand prisoners, through Treviso to the opposite bank of the Tagliamento; where Alvinzi at length, by the valley of the Drave, reunited the remnant of his scattered forces.²

Notwithstanding these disasters, the public spirit of the Austrian monarchy remained unsubdued, and the cabinet of Vienna continued unshaken in its resolution to prosecute the war with vigour. On the other hand, the Directory were so much impressed with the imminent risk which the Italian army had run, both at Arcola and Rivoli, and the evident peril to the Republic from the rising fame and domineering character of Napoleon, that they were very desirous of peace, and authorised Clarke to sign it, on condition that Belgium and the frontier of the Rhine were given to

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XX.

1797.

¹ Hard. iv.
164, 167.
Jom. viii.
294. Nap.
iii. 422.
Vict. et
Conq. viii.
53, 54.

^{149.}
Vigorous
measures of
Napoleon in
pursuit.

² Jom. viii.
302, 304.
Nap. iii. 421,
422. Vict.
et Conq. viii.
55, 57.

^{150.}
Patriotic
spirit in the
Austrian
dominions.

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France, an indemnity secured to the Stadtholder in Germany, and all its possessions restored to Austria and Italy. But Napoleon again resolutely opposed these instructions, and would not permit Clarke to open the proposed negotiations. "Before Mantua falls," said he, "every negotiation is premature, and Mantua will be in our hands in fifteen days. These conditions will never meet with my approbation. The Republic is entitled, besides the frontier of the Rhine, to insist for the establishment of a state in Italy, which may secure the French influence there, and retain in its subjection Genoa, Sardinia, and the Pope. Without that, Venice, enlightened at last as to its real danger, will unite with the emperor, and restrain the growth of democratic principles in its Italian possessions." The influence of Napoleon again prevailed; the proposed negotiation was never opened, and Clarke remained at Milan, occupied with his subordinate but overwhelming duty of restraining the rapacity of the commissaries of the army.¹

¹ Hard. iv.
170, 174.

151.
Surrender
of Mantua.
Jan. 28.

Mantua did not long hold out after the destruction of the last army destined for its relief. The half of its once numerous garrison was in the hospital; they had consumed all their horses, and the troops, placed for months on half rations, had nearly exhausted all their provisions. In this extremity Wurmser proposed to Serurier to capitulate: the French commander stated that he could give no definite answer till the arrival of the general-in-chief. Napoleon in consequence hastened to Roverbella, where he found Klenau, the Austrian aide-de-camp, expatiating on the powerful means of resistance which Wurmser possessed, and the great stores of provisions which still remained in the magazines. Wrapped in his cloak near the fire, he overheard the conversation, without taking any part in it, or making himself known; when it was concluded, he approached the table, took up the pen, and wrote on the margin his answer to all the propositions of Wurmser, and when it was finished said to Klenau, "If Wurmser had only provisions for eighteen or twenty days, and he spoke of surrendering, he would have merited no favourable terms; but I respect the age, the valour, and the misfortunes of the marshal: here are the conditions which I offer him, if he surrender to-morrow; should he

delay a fortnight, a month, or two months, he shall have the same conditions ; he may wait till he has consumed his last morsel of bread. I am now about to cross the Po to march upon Rome : return and communicate my intentions to your general." The aide-de-camp, who now perceived that he was in the presence of Napoleon, was penetrated with gratitude for the generosity of the conqueror : and finding that it was useless to dissimulate, confessed that they had only provisions left for three days. The terms of capitulation were immediately agreed on. Wurmser was allowed to retire to Austria with all his staff and five hundred men ; the remainder of the garrison, which, including the sick, was still eighteen thousand strong, surrendered their arms, and was conveyed to Trieste to be exchanged. Fifty standards, a bridge equipment, and above five hundred pieces of artillery, comprising all those captured at the raising of the first siege, fell into the hands of the conqueror. Napoleon set out himself to Florence to conduct the expedition against Rome, and Serrurier had the honour of seeing the marshal with all his staff de file before him. Napoleon had too much grandeur of mind to insult the vanquished veteran by his own presence on the occasion ; his delicacy was observed by all Europe ; and, like the statues of Brutus and Cassius at the funeral of Junia, he was the more present to the mind because he was withdrawn from the sight.¹

Having achieved this great conquest, Napoleon directed his arms against Rome. The power which had vanquished, after so desperate a struggle, the strength of Austria, was not long of crushing the feeble forces of the Church. During the strife on the Adige, the Pope had refused to ratify the treaty of Bologna, and had openly engaged in hostile measures at the conclusion of the campaign, in conjunction with the forces of Austria. The French troops, in consequence, crossed the Appenines ; and during the march Wurmser had an opportunity of returning the generous conduct of his adversary, by putting him on his guard against a conspiracy which had been formed against his life, and being thus the means of causing it to be frustrated. The papal troops were routed on the banks of Senio : like the other Italian armies, the infantry fled on the first onset, and Junot, after two hours' hard riding,

¹ Nap. iii.
423, 425.
Jom. viii.
305. Th.
viii. 523, 524.
O'Meara, i.
126.

152.
Napoleon
marches
towards
Rome, and
concludes
the treaty of
Tolentino
with the
Pope.

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1797.

19th Feb.

1 *Jom.* viii.
312, 313.
Nap. iii. 425.
O'Mea. ii.
127.

153.
Views of the
Directory in
this treaty.

2 *Corresp.*
Confid. de
Napoleon, ii.
349 and 543.
Hard. iv.
181, 182.

found it impossible to make up with their cavalry. Ancona was speedily taken, with twelve hundred men, and one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon, while a small column on the other side of the Appenines pushed on as far as Foligno, and threatened Rome itself. Nothing remained to the Vatican but submission; and peace was concluded at Tolentino, on the 19th February, on terms the most humiliating to the Holy See. The Pope engaged to close his ports against the Allies; to cede Avignon and the Venaisin to France; to abandon Bologna, Ferrara, and the whole of Romagna, to its allies in the Milanese; to admit a garrison of French troops into Ancona, till the conclusion of a general peace; and to pay a contribution of thirty millions of francs to the victorious Republic. Besides this, he was obliged to surrender a hundred of his principal works of art to the French commissioners; the trophies of ancient and modern genius were seized on with merciless rapacity; and in a short time the noblest specimens of the fine arts which existed in the world, the Apollo Belvidere, the Laocoon, the Transfiguration of Raphael, the Madonna del Foligno, and the St Jerome of Domenichino, were placed on the banks of the Seine.¹

This treaty was concluded by the French under the idea that it would eventually prove fatal to the Holy See. Napoleon proposed to overturn at once the papal government:—"Can we not," said he, "unite Modena, Ferrara, and Romagna, and so form a powerful republic? May we not give Rome to the King of Spain, provided he recognises the new republic? I will give peace to the Pope on condition that he gives us 3,000,000 of the treasure at Loretto, and pays the 15,000,000 which remain for the armistice. Rome cannot long exist deprived of its richest possessions; a revolution will speedily break out there."—On their side, the Directory wrote as follows to Napoleon: "Your habits of reflection, general, must have taught you, that the Roman Catholic religion is the irreconcilable enemy of the Republic. The Directory, therefore, invite you to do every thing in your power to destroy the papal government, without in any degree compromising the fate of your army—either by subjecting Rome to another power, or, what would be better still,² by establishing in its interior such a government as may render

the rule of the priests odious and contemptible, secure the grand object, that the Pope and the cardinals shall lose all hope of remaining at Rome, and may be compelled to seek an asylum in some foreign state, where they may be entirely stripped of temporal power."

Such was the campaign of 1796—glorious to the French arms, memorable in the history of the world. Certainly on no former occasion had successes so great been achieved in so short a time, or powers so vast been vanquished by forces so inconsiderable. From maintaining a painful contest on the mountain ridges of their own frontier, from defending the Var and the Maritime Alps, the Republicans found themselves transported to the Tyrol and the Tagliamento, threatening the hereditary states of Austria, and subduing the whole southern powers of Italy. An army which never mustered fifty thousand men in the field, though maintained by successive reinforcements nearly at that amount, had not only broken through the barrier of the Alps, subdued Piedmont, conquered Lombardy, humbled the whole Italian states, but defeated, and almost destroyed, four powerful armies which Austria raised to defend her possessions, and wrenched the keys of Mantua from her grasp, under the eyes of the greatest successive arrays of armed men she had ever sent into the field. Successes so immense, gained against forces so vast and efforts so indefatigable, may almost be pronounced unparalleled in the annals of war.*

But although its victories in the field had been so brilliant, the internal situation of the Republic was in the highest degree discouraging; and it was more than doubtful whether it could continue for any length of time even so glorious a contest. Its condition is clearly depicted in a secret report, presented, by order of the Directory, on 20th December 1796, by General Clarke to Napoleon:—"The lassitude of war is experienced in all parts of the

CHAP.

XX.

1797.

154.

Retrospect
of the cam-
paign.

155.

Losses with
which it had
been at-
tended.

* In his Confidential Despatch to the Directory of 28th December 1796, Napoleon states the force with which he commenced the campaign at thirty-eight thousand five hundred men, the subsequent reinforcements at twelve thousand six hundred, and the losses by death and incurable wounds at seven thousand. There can be no doubt that he enormously diminished his losses and reinforcements; for the Directory maintained he had received reinforcements to the amount of fifty-seven thousand men.—*Corres. Conf.* ii. 312.

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XX.

1797.

¹ Report by
Clarke.
Corresp.
Conf. de
Nap. ii. 426.

Republic. The people ardently desire peace ; their murmurs are loud that it is not already concluded. The legislature desires it, commands it, no matter at what price ; and its continued refusal to furnish to the Directory the necessary funds to carry on the contest, is the best proof of that fact. The finances are ruined ; agriculture in vain demands the arms which are required for cultivation. The war is become so universal, as to threaten to overturn the Republic ; all parties, worn out with anxiety, desire the termination of the Revolution. Should our internal misery continue, the people, exhausted by suffering, having experienced none of the benefits which they expected, will establish a new order of things, which will in its turn generate fresh revolutions, and we shall undergo, for twenty or thirty years, all the agonies consequent on such convulsions."¹

156.
Extraordi-
nary com-
position of
the French
army.

Much of Napoleon's success was no doubt owing to the admirable character, unwearied energy, and indomitable courage, of the troops which composed the French army. The world had never seen an array framed of such materials. The terrible whirlwind which had overthrown the fabric of society in France, the patriotic spirit which had brought its whole population into the field, the grinding misery which had forced all its activity into war, had formed a union of intelligence, skill, and ability, among the private soldiers, such as had never before been witnessed in modern warfare. The middling—even the higher ranks—were to be seen with a musket on their shoulders ; the great levies of 1793 had spared neither high nor low ; the career of glory and ambition could be entered only through the portals of the bivouac. Hence it was that the spirit which animated them was so fervent, and their intelligence so remarkable ; that the humblest grenadiers anticipated all the designs of their commanders, and knew of themselves, in every situation of danger and difficulty, what should be done. When Napoleon spoke to them, in his proclamations, of Brutus, Scipio, and Tarquin, he was addressing men whose hearts thrilled at the recollections which these names awaken ; and when he led them into action after a night-march of ten leagues,² he commanded those who felt as thoroughly as himself the inestimable

² Th. viii.
522.

importance of time in war. With truth might Napoleon say, that his soldiers had surpassed the far-famed celerity of Cæsar's legions.

But, however much was owing to the troops who obeyed, still more was to be ascribed to the general who commanded, in this memorable campaign. In this struggle is to be seen the commencement of the new system of tactics which Napoleon brought to such perfection; that of accumulating forces in a central situation, striking with the whole mass the detached wings of the enemy, separating them from each other, and compensating by rapidity of movement for inferiority of numbers. Most of his triumphs were achieved by the steady and skilful application of this principle; all, when he was inferior in numerical amount to his opponents. At Montenotte he broke into the centre of the Austro-Sardinian army, when it was executing a difficult movement through the mountains, separated the Piedmontese from the Imperialists, accumulated an overwhelming force against the latter at Dego, and routed the former when detached from their allies at Mondovì. When Wurmser approached Verona, with his army divided into parts separated from each other by a lake, Napoleon was on the brink of ruin; but he retrieved his affairs by sacrificing the siege of Mantua, and falling with superior numbers, first on Quasdanovich at Lonato, and then on Wurmser at Castiglione. When the second irruption of the Germans took place, and Wurmser still continued the system of dividing his troops, it was by a skilful use of his central position that the French general defeated his efforts; first assailing with a superior force the subsidiary body at Roveredo, and then pursuing with the rapidity of lightning, the main body of the invaders through the gorges of the Brenta. When Alvinzi assumed the command, and Vaubois was routed in the Tyrol, the affairs of the French were all but desperate; but the central position and rapid movements of Napoleon again restored the balance: checking, in the first instance, the advance of Davidovich on the plateau of Rivoli, and next engaging in a mortal strife with Alvinzi in the marshes of Arcola. When Austria made her final effort, and Alvinzi surrounded Joubert at Rivoli, it was only by the most rapid movements, and almost incredible activity, that the double

CHAP.
XX.

1797.

157.
Great genius
of Napoleon.
His system
of war.

CHAP.

XX.

1797.

attack was defeated; the same troops crushing the main body of the Austrians on the steeps of the Montebaldo; who afterwards surrounded Provera on the lake of Mantua. The same system was afterwards pursued with the greatest success by Wellington in Portugal, and Napoleon himself at Dresden, and in the plains of Champagne.

158.
But it will
not succeed
against
troops
equally
brave and
skilful.

But, to the success of such a system of operations, it is indispensable that the troops who undertake it should be superior in bodily activity and moral courage to their adversaries, and that the general-in-chief can securely leave a slender force to cope with the enemy in one quarter, while he is accumulating his masses to overwhelm them in another. Unless this is the case, the commander who throws himself at the head of an inconsiderable body into the midst of the enemy, will be certain of encountering instead of inflicting disaster. Without such a degree of courage and activity as enables him to calculate with certainty upon hours, and sometimes minutes, it is impossible to expect success from such a hazardous system. Of this signal proof occurred in Bohemia in 1813, when the French, encouraged by their great triumph before Dresden, threw themselves inconsiderately into the midst of the Allies in the mountains of Toplitz; but, meeting there with the undaunted Russian and Prussian forces, they experienced the most dreadful reverses, and in a few days lost the whole fruit of a mighty victory.

159.
Cause of the
disasters of
the Aus-
trians.

The disasters of the Austrians were mainly owing to the injudicious plan which they so perseveringly adopted, of dividing their force into separate bodies, and commencing an attack at the same time at stations so far distant, that the attacking columns could render little assistance to each other. This system may succeed very well against ordinary troops, or timorous generals, who, the moment they hear of their flank being turned, or their communications menaced, lay down their arms, or fall back; but against intrepid soldiers, and a resolute commander, who turns fiercely on every side, and brings a preponderating mass first against one assailant, and then another, it is almost sure of leading to disasters. The Aulic Council was not to blame for adopting this system, in the first instance, against the French armies, because it might have been expected to succeed against ordinary troops, and had

done so in many previous instances ; but they were inexcusable for continuing it so long, after the character of the opponents with whom they had to deal had so fully displayed itself. The system of concentric attacks rarely succeeds against an able and determined enemy, because the chances which the force in the centre has of beating first one column and then another, are so considerable. When it does, it is only when the different masses of the attacking party, as at Leipsic and Dresden, are so immense, that each can stand a separate encounter for itself, or can fall back, in the event of being outnumbered, without seriously endangering, by such a retreat, the safety of the other assailing columns.

The Italian campaign demonstrates, in the most signal manner, the vast importance of fortresses in war, and the vital consequence of such barriers to arrest the course of military conquest. The surrender of the fortresses of Coni, Alexandria, and Tortona, by giving the French a secure base for their operations, speedily made them masters of the whole of Lombardy ; while the single fortress of Mantua arrested their victorious arms for six months, and gave time to Austria to collect no less than four powerful armies for its deliverance. No man understood this better than Napoleon ; and accordingly, without troubling himself with the projects so earnestly pressed upon him of revolutionising Piedmont, he grasped the fortresses, and thereby laid the foundation for all his subsequent conquests. Without the surrender of the Piedmontese citadels, he would not have been able to push his advantages in Italy beyond the Po ; but for the bastions of Mantua, he might have carried them, as in the succeeding campaign, to the Danube.

It is melancholy to reflect on the degraded state of the Italian powers during this terrible struggle. An invasion, which brought on all her people unheard-of calamities, which overspread her plains with bloodshed, and exposed her cities to rapine, was unable to excite the spirit of her pacific inhabitants ; and neither of the contending parties deemed it worth their while to bestow a serious thought on the dispositions or assistance of the twenty millions of men who were to be the reward of the strife. The country of Cæsar and Scipio, of Cato and Brutus, beheld in silent

CHAP.

XX.

1797.

160.
General reflections on the campaign.

161.
Degradation of the Italians at this period.

CHAP.
XX.

1797.

dismay the protracted contest of two provinces of its ancient empire, and prepared to bow the neck in abject submission to either of its former vassals which might prove victorious in the strife. A division of the French army was sufficient to disperse the levies of the Roman people. Such is the consequence of political divisions and long-continued prosperity, even in the richest and most favoured countries ; of that fatal policy which withers the spirits of men by fettering their ambition ; of that indulgence of the selfish passions which ends in annihilating the generous ; and of that thirst for pleasure which subverts the national independence by destroying the warlike spirit by which alone it can be maintained.

162.
Unconquer-
able tenacity
of the Aus-
trians.

Finally, this campaign evinced, in the most signal manner, the persevering character and patriotic spirit of the Austrian people, and the prodigious efforts of which its monarchy is capable, when roused by real danger to vigorous exertion. It is impossible to contemplate, without admiration, the vast armies which they successively sent into the field, and the unconquerable courage with which these returned to a contest where so many thousands of their countrymen had perished before them. Had they been guided by greater, or opposed by less ability, they unquestionably would have been successful ; and even against the soldiers of the Italian army, and the genius of Napoleon, the scales of fortune repeatedly hung equal. A nation capable of such sacrifices can hardly ever be permanently subdued ; a government, actuated by such steady principles, must ultimately be triumphant. Such, accordingly, has been the case in the present instance. Aristocratic firmness in the end asserted its wonted superiority over democratic vigour ; the dreams of Republican equality have been forgotten, but the Austrian government remains unchanged ; the French eagles have retired over the Alps ; and Italy, the theatre of so much bloodshed, finally remains to the successors of the Cæsars.

CHAPTER XXI.

CAMPAIGN OF 1796 IN GERMANY.

WHEN the Directory was called, by the suppression of the insurrection of the Sections, and the establishment of the new constitution, to the helm of the state, they found the Republic in a very critical situation, and its affairs externally and internally involved in almost insurmountable difficulties. The finances were in a state of increasing and inextricable confusion; the assignats, which had for long constituted the sole resource of government, had fallen almost to nothing; ten thousand francs in paper were hardly worth twenty francs in specie, and the unbounded depreciation of that species of circulation seemed to render the establishment of any other circulating medium of the same description impossible. The taxes for many years back had been so ill paid, that Ramel, the minister of finance, estimated the arrears in his department at fifteen hundred millions in specie, or above £60,000,000 sterling. The armies, destitute of pay, ill equipped, worse clothed, were discontented, and the recent disasters on the Rhine had completely broken the susceptible spirit of the French soldiers. The artillery and cavalry were without horses; the infantry, depressed by suffering and dejected by defeat, were deserting in great numbers, and seeking a refuge in their homes from the toils and the miseries of war. The contest in La Vendée was still unextinguished; the Republican armies had been driven with disgrace behind the Rhine, and the troops in the Maritime Alps, worn out with privations, could not be relied on with certainty for offensive operations.¹

CHAP.

XXI.

1796.

1.

Great difficulties of the French Government at the commencement of this year.

¹ Jom. viii
22. Toul.
vi. 9.

CHAP.
XXI.

1796.

2.

But her
foreign re-
lations had
greatly im-
proved.

But on the other hand, the external relations of the Republic had eminently improved; and the vast exertions of 1794, even though succeeded by the lassitude and weakness of 1795, had produced a most important effect on the relative situation of the belligerent powers. Spain, defeated and humiliated, had sued for peace; and the treaty of Bâle, by liberating the armies of the Eastern and Western Pyrenees, had both enabled the French government to reinforce the armies of La Vendée, and to afford means to the young Conqueror of the Sections of carrying the Republican standards into the plains of Lombardy. Prussia had retired without either honour or advantage from the struggle; the Low Countries were not only subdued, but their resources turned against the Allied powers; and the whole weight of the contest on the Rhine, it was plain, must now fall on the Austrian monarchy. England, baffled and disgraced on the Continent, was not likely to take any effective part in military warfare, and there seemed little doubt that the power which had recently defeated all the coalesced armies of Europe would be able to subdue the brave but now unaided forces of the Imperialists.

3.

Triple alli-
ance of Eng-
land, Russia,
and Austria.
27th Sept.
1795.

Aware of the coming danger, Mr Pitt had, in the September preceding, concluded a triple alliance between Great Britain, Austria, and Russia: but the forces of Russia were too far distant, and the danger to its possessions too remote, to permit any material aid to be early acquired from its immense resources. It was not till a later period, and till the fire had fastened on its own vitals, that the might of this gigantic power was effectually roused, and the legions of the North brought to reassert their wonted superiority over the forces of Southern Europe.¹

¹ Jom. viii.
4. Ann.
Reg. 1796,
1798.

4.

Painful
division of
opinion in
England on
the war.

The condition of England, in the close of 1795 and the beginning of 1796, was nearly as distracted, so far as opinion went, as that of France. The continued disasters of the war, the pressure of new and increasing taxation, the apparent hopelessness of continuing the struggle with a military power which all the armies of Europe had proved unable to subdue, not only gave new strength and vigour to the Whig party, who had all along opposed hostilities, but induced many thoughtful men who had con-

curred at first in the necessity of combating the revolutionary mania, to hesitate as to any further continuance of the contest. So violent had party spirit become, and so completely had it usurped the place of patriotism or reason, that many of the popular leaders had come to wish anxiously for the triumph of their enemies. It was no longer a simple disapprobation of the war which they felt, but a fervent desire that it might terminate to the disadvantage of their country, and that the Republican might triumph over the British arms. They thought that there was no chance of parliamentary reform being carried, or any considerable addition to democratic power acquired, unless the ministry were dispossessed; and to accomplish this object, they hesitated not to betray their wish for the success of the inveterate enemy of their country. Those animosities produced their usual effect of rendering the moderate or rational equally odious to both parties; whoever deplored the war was reputed a foe to his country; whoever pronounced it necessary, was deemed a conspirator against its liberty, and an abettor of arbitrary power.¹

These ill humours, which were afloat during the whole of the summer of 1795, broke out into acts of open violence in the autumn of that year. The associations for the purpose of obtaining parliamentary reform increased in boldness and activity: among them were many emissaries of the French government, and numbers of natives of this country, who had thrown off all connexion with it in their hearts, and were become its most violent and rancorous enemies. They deluded immense bodies of men by the seducing language of freedom which they used, and the alluring prospect of peace which they held forth. Societies having these captivating advantages for their professed objects, were generally formed in the great towns; and, under the banner of reform, succeeded in assembling, in every quarter, all that ambition had which was reckless, with all that indigence could collect which was desperate. These causes of discontent were increased by the high price of provisions, the natural consequence of the increased consumption and enlarged circulating medium required in the war; but which the lower orders, under the instigation of their demagogues, ascribed entirely to

CHAP.
XXI.

1796.

¹ Ann. Reg.
1795-6-7.

5.
Violence of
the parties
in the close
of 1795.

CHAP. the ministry, and the crusade which they had undertaken
 XXI. against the liberties of mankind.

1796.

6.

Attempts to
 assassinate
 the King.
 29th Oct.
 1795.

It was fortunate at this crisis, that the rural population every where remained firm, and the seditious movements were confined chiefly to the excitable population of the commercial towns. At length, on occasion of the King's going to Parliament, at its opening, on 29th October 1795, these discontents broke out into open outrages of the most disgraceful kind. The royal carriage was surrounded by an immense crowd of turbulent persons, loudly demanding peace, and the dismissal of Mr Pitt. One of the windows was broken by a pebble, or bullet from an air-gun; showers of stones were thrown at the state-coach, both going and returning from Parliament; and the monarch narrowly escaped the fury of the populace, in his way from St James's Palace to Buckingham House. These outrages, however, tended only to strengthen the hands of government, by demonstrating to all reasonable men to what excesses the populace would speedily be driven if not restrained by a firm hand, and how thin was the partition which separated this country from the horrors of the French Revolution.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
 8-11.

7.

Arguments
 of the Oppo-
 sition on the
 war.

In debating on the address, Mr Fox maintained that the representations of ministers were flattering and delusive; that £100,000,000 had already been added to the national debt, and £4,000,000 a-year to the permanent taxes; that the coalition had been every where defeated, and the French were preparing to invade Italy with a powerful army; that the example of America proved how fallacious was the hope, that a nation resolved to be free could be reduced to extremity, by the mere failure of pecuniary resources; that the alleged danger of concluding peace with a revolutionary power had been surmounted by the despotic governments of Spain and Prussia, and if so, what peril could arise from it to the constitutional monarchy of England? that we had in truth no allies, but a mere set of mercenary associates, who would abandon our interests the moment that it suited their own convenience; and that the severe scarcity, which now desolated all Europe, seemed to be the consequence of the obstacles to cultivation, which the ravages of war occasioned, and could not be expected to terminate while they continued.²

² Ann. Reg.
 12. Parl.
 Hist. xxxii.
 1012, 1016.

On the other hand, it was urged by Mr Pitt, that every consideration, both of justice and policy, called upon us for a vigorous prosecution of the contest; that notwithstanding his successes in the field, the enemy now began to feel his debility, and had in consequence evinced a disposition to accommodate, which he never before had done; that the French paper was now at little more than a hundredth part of its nominal value; and though the enormous sum of £750,000,000 worth of assignats had been created, this quantity was hourly on the increase: that it was incredible that a nation reduced to such straits, could long support a contest with the formidable enemies who were preparing to assail it by land and sea; and that the system of maintaining war by the heinous method of confiscations and a forced paper currency, however successful for the time, must lead in the end to ruin: that the numbers of the French armies, and the desperate spirit by which they were animated, arose from the misery of the country, the stagnation of industry, and the impossibility of finding subsistence in pacific employments; but that this system, however successful, when a war of invasion and plunder was carried on, could not be maintained for any length of time, when the French armies were repelled, as they now were on all sides, to their own frontiers, and compelled to subsist on their own resources; that now, therefore, was the time, when the enemy's breath was so evidently failing, to press him hard on every side, and reduce him to such a peace as might protect Europe from Gallic aggression, and England from Republican innovation.¹

Such were the arguments urged in public, both in the House of Lords and Commons, on the policy of continuing the war; and both Houses, by a great majority, supported the administration; the numbers being in the Lower House 240 to 59. But the real motives which influenced both sides were materially different. It was a domestic war which was really waged; it was the contest between aristocratic ascendancy and democratic ambition which at bottom divided the country, and excited the fierce and implacable passions by which all classes were animated. The popular party perceived that their chance of success was altogether nugatory while the firm hand which now held the reins continued at the head of affairs, and that,

CHAP.
XXI.

1796.

8.
Answer of
Government.

1 Ann. Reg.
9-12. Parl.
Hist. xxxii.
1030, 1048.

9.
Real objects
in view by
the different
parties.

CHAP.
XXI.

1796.

while the national spirit was excited by the war with France, the ascendancy of the conservative party might be looked upon as certain: while the adherents to ancient institutions felt that the continuance of the contest at any price was preferable to the flood of democracy with which they would be deluged at its close; and that, till the excitement created by the French Revolution had subsided, no passion but that for war could be relied on to counteract its effects. Thus, though the ground on which the parties engaged was the expedience of continuing the strife, the object which both had really in view was the form of domestic government, and the passions which actuated them, in truth, the same as those which distracted France and agitated Europe.

10.
Supplies
voted by
Parliament.

To enable government to carry on the war, Parliament voted supplies to the amount of £27,500,000, exclusive of the interest of the debt; and in this was included the enormous sum of £18,000,000 contracted by loan, the annual charge of which was £1,100,000, which was provided for by a considerable addition to the assessed taxes. But the total expenditure of the year amounted to £37,500,000, and the remainder was raised, in spring 1796, by exchequer bills and annuities, to the amount of £13,500,000, which made the total loans of that year £31,500,000. Mr Pitt stated it as a most remarkable circumstance, that in the fourth year of so expensive a war, this large loan was obtained at so low a rate as four and a half per cent; and, without doubt, it was a signal proof of the profusion of capital and confidence in government which prevailed in Britain. But he forgot the ruinous terms on which the loan was contracted for future years; that a bond of £100 was given for every £60 advanced, and posterity saddled with the payment of an immense debt which the nation had never received. This observation, how obvious soever, was not then perceived by the ablest persons even of practical habits. No one looked forward to the repayment of the debt, and the nation reposed in fancied security on the moderate annual charge which the loan imposed on the country.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
53, 64. App.
108.

Another matter of the highest importance gave rise to the most vehement debates both in the legislature and the country: this was the bills which government introduced

for providing additional security to the King's person, and for the prevention of seditious meetings.¹ No measure had been brought forward by government since the Revolution, which excited such vehement opposition both in the legislature and the country, as these celebrated statutes, which were stigmatised by the popular party as the Pitt and Grenville acts, in order that they might for ever be held in execration by the country. By the latter, it was required that notice should be given to the magistrate of any public meeting to be held on political subjects; he was authorised to be present, and empowered to seize those guilty of sedition on the spot; and a second offence against the act was punishable with transportation. On the part of the Opposition it was urged, that meetings held under such restrictions, and with the dread of imprisonment hanging over the speakers for any word which might escape from them in the heat of debate, could never be considered as the free and unbiassed meetings of Englishmen; that so violent an infringement had never been attempted on the liberties of the people since the days of the Tudors; that if the times were so far changed that Englishmen could no longer meet and deliberate on public affairs without endangering the state, it would be better at once to surrender their liberties, as in Denmark, into the hands of a despotic sovereign; that it was evident, however, that there really was no such danger as was apprehended, but the alarm was only a pretence to justify the adoption of arbitrary measures; that it was in vain to appeal to the example of France, as vindicating the necessity of such rigorous enactments; every body knew that the revolution in that country was not owing to Jacobin clubs, or the meetings of the people, but to the corruptions of the court, and the vices of the political system; and if this bill should pass, the people of this country, rendered desperate by the imposition of similar fetters, would, without all doubt, break, in their own defence, into similar excesses.¹

On the other hand, it was argued by the Administration, that it was necessary to consider the bill attentively before representing it in such odious colours; that it imposed restrictions only on public assemblies, and left unfettered the press, the great palladium of liberty in every repre-

CHAP.
XXI.

1796.

11.

Bills against
public meet-
ings.

Arguments
against these
statutes.

136 Geo.
III. c. 18
and 36.

¹ Ann. Reg.
22, 27.
Parl. Hist.
24, 37.

CHAP.
XXI.

1796.

12.

Arguments
in favour of
them by the
Administra-
tion.

1 Ann. Reg.
23, 32. Parl.
Hist. xxxiii.
49, 62.

13.
Bills pass
into laws,
and Opposi-
tion with-
draw in dis-
gust.

2 Ann Reg.
46.

sentative monarchy ; that public meetings required to be narrowly watched in turbulent times, because it was in such great assemblages that the passions took fire, and men were precipitated, by mutual excitement, into violent measures ; that the great danger of such meetings arose from the fact, that only one side was heard, and extravagant sentiments were always those which gained most applause ; that the object of the meetings against which these enactments were levelled, was notorious, being nothing less than the overthrow of the monarchy, and the formation of a republican constitution similar to that established with such disastrous effects in France ; that the proposed enactments were certainly a novelty in this country, but so also was the democratic spirit against which they were levelled, and extraordinary times required extraordinary remedies ; and that no danger was to be apprehended to public freedom, as long as the press was unfettered, and juries regarded with so much jealousy as they now did, all the measures which emanated from the authority of government.¹

The bill passed the House of Commons by a majority of two hundred and fourteen to forty-two, and the House of Lords by sixty-six to seven. So exasperated were the Opposition with the success of Ministers on this occasion, that Mr Fox, and a large part of the minority, withdrew altogether for a considerable time from the House ; a ruinous measure, dictated by spite and disappointment, and which should never, on any similar occasion, be repeated by true patriots. The bill was limited in its duration to three years ; and, after passing both Houses, it received the royal assent. On coolly reviewing the subject of such vehement contention in the Parliament and the nation, it is impossible to deny that it is beset with difficulties ; and that nothing but the manifest danger of the times could have furnished an excuse for so wide a deviation from the principles of British freedom. At the same time it is evident that the bills, limited as they were in their duration, and partial in their operation, were not calculated to produce the mischiefs which their opponents so confidently predicted. The proof of this is decisive : the bills were passed, and the liberties of England not only remained entire, but have since that time continually gone on increasing.²

In truth, the management of a country which has become infected with the contagion of democratic ambition, is one of the most difficult matters in government, and one of which the principles are only now beginning to be understood. It is always to be recollected, that the formidable thing in periods of agitation, and that against which governments are, in an especial manner, called to raise a barrier, is not the discontent arising from real grievance, but the passion springing from popular ambition. The first, being founded in reason and justice, is easily dealt with: it subsides with the removal of the causes which called it forth, and strong measures are very seldom required or justifiable for its suppression. The second, being a vehement passion, arising often from no real evil, but awakened by the anticipation of power, is insatiable; it increases with every gratification it receives, and conducts the nation, through blood and suffering, by a sure and rapid progress, to military despotism. The same danger to freedom is to be apprehended from the prevention of the expression of real suffering, as from concession to democratic ambition. Reform and redress are the remedies suited to the former; resistance and firmness the regimen adapted to the latter. In considering, therefore, whether the measures of Mr Pitt at that period were justifiable or not, the question is, did the public discontents arise from the experience of real evils, or the contagion of democratic ambition? And when it is recollected from what example, in the neighbouring kingdom, these passions were excited, how much the liberties of England have subsequently augmented, and what a career of splendour and prosperity has since been opened, it is evident that no rational doubt can be entertained on the subject. And the event has proved, that more danger to freedom is to be apprehended from concession than from resistance in such circumstances; for British liberty has since that time steadily increased, under all the coercion applied by a firm government to its excesses; while French enthusiasm has led to no practical protection of the people; and the nation has perpetually fallen under a succession of despots, in the vain endeavour to establish a chimerical equality.

Previous to the opening of the campaign of 1796, the British government, in order to bring the French Directory

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1796.

14.
Reflections
on these
measures.

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15.

Proposals
for peace by
the British
government,
which are
rejected by
the Direc-
tory.
8th March.

Feb. 15 and
April 19.
1 Ann. Reg.
App. 108.
Th. viii. 200,
201. Join.
viii. 8.

16.
Operations
of Hoche in
La Vendée.
His charac-
ter.

to the test, authorised their agent in Switzerland, Mr Wickham, to make advances to the French minister on the subject of a general peace. The Directory replied, that they could only treat on the footing of the constitution; in other words, that they must insist on retaining the Low Countries. This at once brought matters to an issue, for neither Austria nor England were as yet sufficiently humbled to consent to such terms. The declaration of this resolution, however, on the part of the Directory, was of great service to the English cabinet, by demonstrating the impossibility of treating, without abandoning all the objects of the war, and putting France permanently in possession of a salient angle, from which it threatened the liberties of all Europe, and which experience has proved cannot be left in its hands, without exposing them to imminent hazard. Mr Pitt accordingly announced the resolution of the Directory to the British Parliament, and immediately obtained further supplies for carrying on the war—an additional loan, as already mentioned, of £7,500,000 was negotiated, upon as favourable terms as the former, and exchequer bills, to the amount of £6,000,000 more, were put at the disposal of government, out of which £3,000,000 were granted to Austria.¹

The first active operations of this memorable year took place in La Vendée, where the republican general, HOCHÉ, commanded an army of a hundred thousand men. This vast force, the greatest which the Republic had on foot, composed of all the troops in the west of France, and those drawn from Biscay and the western Pyrenees, was intrusted to a general of twenty-seven years of age, whose absolute power extended over all the insurgent provinces. He was in every respect qualified for the important but difficult duty with which he was charged. Endowed by nature with a clear judgment, an intrepid character, and an unconquerable resolution; firm, sagacious, and humane, he was eminently characterised by that mixture of gentleness and resolution which is necessary to heal the wounds and subdue the passions of civil war. This rare combination of civil and military qualities might have rendered him a formidable rival of Napoleon, and possibly endangered the public peace, had he not united to these shining parts a patriotic heart and a love of liberty which rendered him

superior to all temptation ; and made him more likely, had he lived, to have followed the example of Washington, than to tread in the footsteps of Caesar or Cromwell. But it is more than probable that his independent spirit would never have brooked the usurpation of power by that extraordinary man ; and his great popularity with the army would possibly have given him the means of combating his ambition with success, and prolonging in France for a few years longer than the 18th Brumaire the delusive phantom of republican institutions.¹

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¹ Biog. Univ.
xx. 436, 438.
(Hoche.)

Lazare Hoche, like all the great warriors of the Revolution, owed his elevation entirely to his own abilities ; but they rendered him one of the most remarkable men whom that convulsion brought forth. He was born on February 24, 1768, at Montreuil, near Versailles, where his father pursued the humble occupation of *garde de chenille* under Louis XV. ; and he made his first entrance into life at the age of fourteen as a supernumerary understrapper in the royal stables. His parents having soon after died, he would have been utterly destitute but for the assistance of an aunt, a fruit-woman in Versailles, who from time to time supplied him with small sums of money to add to his scanty wages, and buy books, which he literally devoured, by sitting up at night, after his labours in the stables were over. His inclinations prompting him strongly to a military life, he enlisted at the age of sixteen in the Gardes Françaises. While in that service he almost daily mounted extra guards, and engaged in every species of employment he could obtain consistently with his profession, in order to collect money enough to form a little library, to the study of which his whole evenings were devoted. In 1788 he fought a duel in the quarries of Montmartre, on which occasion he received a wound in the face, the scar of which remained through life, and added to his martial appearance. In the following year he was involved in the general and fatal defection of the French Guards ; and having now warmly embraced the principles of the Revolution, he entered into the Municipal Guard of Paris, when it was first raised, immediately after the taking of the Bastille,² and was soon made sergeant-major, from his remarkable skill in his profession,

17.
Early his-
tory of
Hoche.

² Biog. Univ.
xx. 436.
(Hoche.)

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1796.

18.

His first rise
to eminence
in the Re-
publican
armies.

and at length obtained from the minister Clavière a commission as sub-lieutenant.

No sooner had he obtained this rank, than he applied with the utmost diligence to the study of his profession ; and the advantage of this at once appeared at the siege of Thionville. The distinction he there acquired procured for him the command of Dunkirk, threatened in 1793 with an attack by the English under the Duke of York. Hoche powerfully contributed, by the spirit which he infused into the garrison, and the ability with which the sorties were directed, to the defeat of that enterprise, and the overthrow of the covering army under Freytag, at the battle of Hoondschoote. The highest military honours and employments were now open to him, and he proved himself equal to them all. At the age of twenty-four he obtained the command of the army of the Moselle, and he there found antagonists worthy of his powers, in the Duke of Brunswick and the Prussian army ; but such was the vigour and ability of his operations, that, before the close of the campaign, he had driven the allies entirely out of Alsace. He there, however, underwent a strange mutation of fortune. Having denounced Pichegru as engaged in treasonable correspondence with the enemy, to the Committee of Public Salvation, he incurred the wrath of St Just, by whom that general was protected, and, in consequence, was deprived of his command, and exiled to Nice. Hardly had he set out to the place of his banishment, when he was arrested by orders of the Committee of Public Salvation, brought to Paris, and thrown into the Conciergerie, from whence he would infallibly have been brought to the scaffold, had not the Revolution of the 9th Thermidor cut short the career of his oppressors.¹

¹ Biog. Univ.
xx. 437.

19.
His cap-
tivity, and
consequent
moral im-
provement.

The period of his captivity, however, which was very considerable, was of more service to Hoche than that of his triumphs ; for it taught him to think, and enabled him to gain the mastery of his vehement and fiery temper, to which his misfortunes had in some degree been owing. His marvellous career gave him ample room for reflection : for, within the space of ten years, and when not yet turned of twenty-five, he had been successively an understrapper in the royal stables, a general-in-chief of one of the greatest

armies of the Republic, and a captive at the point of death from the revolutionary tribunal. He became, in consequence, grave and silent, thoughtful and reflecting beyond his years, studious and contemplative; and he assumed for his maxim the motto, "Things and not words." These qualities were all necessary to enable him to achieve the difficult task now committed to him by the Directory, of subduing the western provinces, and terminating the dreadful war, which in that quarter had so long consumed the vitals of the state.¹

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1796.

¹ Biog. Univ.
xx. 437.
Th. viii. 206,
208.

Hoche's plan, which was approved of by the Directory, was to reduce La Vendée, and all the provinces to the south of the Loire, before making any attempt upon Brittany, or the departments to the north of that river. All the towns in the insurgent district were declared in a state of siege; the Republican army was authorised to maintain itself in the country where hostilities were continued, and to levy the necessary requisitions from the peasantry; and the towns which fell into the possession of the Republicans were to be protected and provided for like captured fortresses. Pardon was proclaimed to all the chiefs who should lay down their arms, while those who continued the contest were ordered to be shot.²

20.
Hoche's
plan of ope-
rations.

² Biog. Univ.
xx. 437.
Th. viii. 206,
207.

During the absence of Hoche at Paris, in the depth of winter, arranging this plan with the Directory, the Royalist chiefs, in particular Charette and Stofflet, gained considerable successes; the project of disarming the insurgent provinces had made little progress; and the former of these chiefs, having broken through the line, had appeared in the rear of the Republicans. But the arrival of the general-in-chief restored vigour and unanimity to their operations. Charette was closely pursued by several columns, under the command of General Travot; while Stofflet, cut off from all communication with the other Royalists, was driven back upon the shores of the ocean. As a last resource, Charette collected all his forces, and attacked his antagonist at the passage of La Vie. The Royalists, seized with a sudden panic, did not combat with their accustomed vigour; their ranks were speedily broken; their artillery, ammunition, and sacred standard, all fell into the hands of the enemy; Charette himself with difficulty made his escape, with forty or fifty followers; and,

21.
Successes of
Charette
and Stofflet
during the
winter.
Death of
the latter.

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1796.

¹ Jom. viii.
36. Th. viii.
212.

wandering through forests and marshes, owed his safety to the incorruptible fidelity of the peasants of the Marais. In vain he endeavoured to elude his pursuers and join Stofflet; that intrepid chief, himself pressed by the forces of the Republic, after escaping a thousand perils, was betrayed by one of his followers at the farm of Pegrimaud, where he was seized, gagged, and conducted to Angers. He there met death with the same resolution which had distinguished his life.¹

22.
Necessities
of Hoche.

This great success was necessary to establish the credit of the young general, who, accused equally by both parties—by the Royalists of severity, and by the Republicans of moderation—was so beset with difficulties and so much disgusted with his situation, that he formally demanded his dismissal from the command. But Carnot, aware of his abilities, instead of accepting his resignation, confirmed him in his appointments; and, as a mark of the esteem of government, sent him two fine horses—a present not only highly acceptable, but absolutely necessary to the young general. For though at the head of one hundred thousand men, and master of a quarter of France, he was reduced to such straits, by the fall of the paper in which the whole pay of the army was received, that he was absolutely without horses, or equipage of any kind, and was glad to supply his immediate necessities by taking half-a-dozen bridles and saddles, and a few bottles of rum, from the stores left by the English in Quiberon Bay.²

² Th. viii.
214.

23.
Heroic conduct of Charette.

Charette was now the only remaining obstacle to the entire subjugation of the country; for as long as he lived, it never could be considered as pacified. Anxious to get quit of so formidable an enemy on any terms, the Directory offered him a safe retreat into England with his family and such of his followers as he might select, and a million of francs for his own maintenance. Charette replied—"I am ready to die with arms in my hands; but not to fly, and abandon my companions in misfortune. All the vessels of the Republic would not be sufficient to transport my brave soldiers into England. Far from fearing your menaces, I will myself come to seek you in your own camp." The Royalist officers, who perceived that further resistance had become hopeless,³ urged him to retire to Britain, and await a more favourable opportunity of renewing the contest at

³ Beau-champs,
Guerres de
la Vendée,
iv. 198, 202.

the head of the princes and nobility of France. "Gentlemen," said he, with a severe air, "I am not here to judge of the orders which my sovereign has given me: I know them; they are the same which I myself have solicited. Preserve towards them the same fidelity which I shall do; nothing shall shake me in the discharge of my duty."

This indomitable chief, however, could not long withstand the immense bodies which were now directed against him. His band was gradually reduced from seven hundred to fifty, and at last, ten followers. With th's handful of heroes he long kept at bay the Republican forces; but at length, pursued on every side, and tracked out like a wild beast by bloodhounds, he was seized, after a furious combat, and brought, bleeding and mutilated, but unsubdued, to the Republican headquarters. General Travot, with the consideration due to illustrious misfortune, treated him with respect and kindness, but could not avert his fate. He was conducted to Angers, where he was far from experiencing from others the generous treatment of this brave Republican general. Maltreated by the brutal soldiery, dragged along, yet dripping with blood from his wounds, before the populace of the town, weakened by loss of blood, he had need of all his strength of mind to sustain his courage; but, even in this extremity, his firmness never deserted him. On the 27th March he was removed from the prison of Angers to that of Nantes. He entered into the latter town, preceded by a numerous escort, closely guarded by gendarmes and generals glittering in gold and plumes; himself on foot, with his clothes torn and bloody, pale and attenuated; yet an object of more interest than all the splendid throng by whom he was surrounded. Such was his exhaustion from loss of blood, that the undaunted chief fainted on leaving the Quarter of Commerce; but no sooner was his strength revived by a glass of water, than he marched on, enduring for two hours, with heroic constancy, the abuse and imprecations of the populace. He was immediately conducted to the military commission. His examination lasted two hours; but his answers were all clear, consistent, and dignified; openly avowing his Royalist principles, and resolution to maintain them to the last. Upon hearing the sentence of death, he calmly asked for the succours of religion, which were granted him, and

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1796.

24.

He is at length taken prisoner, and condemned to be shot.

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XXI.

1796.

¹ Beau. iv.
201, 202.
Lac. xiii. 78,
79. Jom.
viii. 39. Th.
viii. 216.

25.
His death
and charac-
ter, and ob-
servation of
Napoleon
regarding
him.

slept peaceably the night before the sentence was carried into effect. On the following morning he was brought out for execution. The rolling of drums, the assembly of all the troops and national guard, a countless multitude of spectators, announced the great event which was approaching. At length the hero appeared, descended with a firm step the stairs of the prison, and walked to the Place des Agriculteurs, where the execution was to take place. A breathless silence prevailed. Charette advanced to the appointed place, bared his breast, took his yet bloody arm out of the scarf, and without permitting his eyes to be bandaged, himself gave the command, uttering, with his last breath, the words—"Vive le Roi!"

Thus perished Charette, the last and most indomitable of the Vendéan chiefs. His character cannot be better given than in the words of Napoleon:—"Charette," said he, "was a great character; the true hero of that interesting period of our Revolution, which, if it presents great misfortunes, has at least not injured our glory.—He left on me the impression of real grandeur of mind; the traces of no common energy and audacity, the sparks of genius are apparent in his actions." Though the early massacres which stained the Royalist cause at Machecoul were perpetrated without his orders, yet he had not the romantic generosity, or humane turn of mind, which formed the glorious characteristics of Lescure, Larochejaquelein, and Bonchamps. His mind, cast in a rougher mould, was marked by deeper colours; and in the later stages of the contest, he executed, without scruple, all the severities, which the terrible war in which he was engaged called forth on both sides. If his jealousy of others was sometimes injurious to the Royal cause, his unconquerable firmness prolonged it after every other chance of success was gone; his single arm supported the struggle when the bravest of his followers were sinking in despair; and he has left behind him the glorious reputation of being alike invincible in resolution, inexhaustible in resources, and unsubdued in disaster. Las Cases has recounted an anecdote of him when in command of a small vessel early in life. Though regarded as a person of mere ordinary capacity, he, on one occasion, gave proof of the native energy of his mind. While still a youth, he sailed from

Brest in his cutter, which, having lost its mast, was exposed to the most imminent danger ; the sailors, on their knees, were praying to the Virgin, and totally incapable of making any exertion, till Charette, by killing one, succeeded in bringing the others to a sense of their duty, and thereby saved the vessel. " There ! " said Napoleon, " the true character always appears in great circumstances ; that was a spark which spoke the future hero of La Vendée. We must not always judge of a character from present appearances : there are slumberers whose rousing is terrible. Kleber was one of them ; but his wakening was that of the lion."¹

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The death of Charette terminated the war in the west of France, and gave more joy to the Republicans than the most brilliant victory over the Austrians. The vast army of Hoche spread over the whole country from the Loire to the British Channel, gradually pressed upon the insurgent provinces, and drove the peasantry back towards the shores of the ocean. The policy pursued by the Republican general on this occasion was a model of wisdom ; he took the utmost pains to conciliate the parish priests, who had so powerful an influence over the minds of the people ; and as his columns advanced, seized the cattle and grain of the peasantry, leaving at their dwellings a notice that they would be restored to them when they gave up their weapons, but not till then. The consequence was, that the poor people, threatened with famine, if these their only resources were withheld, were compelled universally to surrender their arms. The army, advancing slowly, completed in this way the disarming of the inhabitants as they proceeded, and left nothing in their rear from which danger was to be apprehended. At length they reached the ocean ; and though the most resolute of the insurgent bands fought with the courage of despair when they found themselves driven back to the sea-coast, yet the great work was by degrees accomplished, the country universally disarmed, and the soldiers put into cantonments in the conquered district. The people, weary of a contest from which no hope could now be entertained, at length every where surrendered their arms, and resumed their pacific occupations ; the Republicans, cantoned in the villages, lived on terms of friendship with their former enemies ;² mutual

¹ Las Cas.
vii. 104, 105.
Beau. iv.
203. Lac.
xiii. 79. Th.
viii. 217.

26.
Termination of the
war in La
Vendée.

² Th. viii.
218. Jom.
viii. 41, 49.
Biog. Univ.
xx. 438.

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exasperation subsided, the clergy communicated openly with a leader who had for the first time treated them with sincerity and kindness; and before the end of the summer, Hoche, instead of requiring new troops, was able to send great reinforcements to the Directory for the support of the armies on the Rhine and in Italy.

27.
Preparations of the Austrians. Archduke Charles put at the head of the army in Germany.

Meanwhile, the cabinet of Vienna, encouraged by the brilliant achievements of Clairfait at the conclusion of the last campaign, and aware, from the incorporation of Flanders with the French Republic, that no accommodation was to be hoped for, was making the utmost efforts to prosecute the war with vigour. A new levy of twenty-five thousand men took place in the hereditary states; the regiments were universally raised to their full complement; and every effort was made to turn to advantage the military spirit and numerous population of the newly acquired province of Galicia. Clairfait, the conqueror of the lines of Mayence, made a triumphal entry into Vienna with unprecedented splendour; but the Aulic Council repaid his achievements by the appointment of the Archduke Charles to the command of the armies on the Rhine—a step which, however ill deserved by his gallant predecessor, was soon justified by the great military abilities of the young prince.¹

¹ Jom. viii.
51. Th. viii.
307.

28.
Forces of the contending parties on the Rhine.

The forces of the contending parties on the Rhine were nearly equal; but the Imperialists had a great superiority in the number and quality of their cavalry. On the Upper Rhine, Moreau commanded seventy thousand infantry and six thousand cavalry; while Wurmser, who was opposed to him, had sixty-two thousand foot and twenty-two thousand horse; but, before this campaign was far advanced, thirty thousand men were detached from this army, to reinforce the broken troops of Beaulieu in Italy. On the Lower Rhine, the Archduke was at the head of seventy-one thousand infantry and twenty-one thousand cavalry; while the army of the Sambre and Meuse, under Jourdan, numbered sixty-eight thousand of the former arm, and eleven thousand of the latter. The disproportion between the numerical strength on the opposite sides, therefore, was not considerable; but the superiority of the Germans in the number and quality of their cavalry gave them a great advantage in an open country, both in

profiting by success and arresting disaster. But, on the one hand, the French were in possession of the fortresses of Luxemburg, Thionville, Metz, and Sarre Louis, which rendered the centre of their position almost unassailable; their right was covered by Huningen, New Brisach, and the fortresses of Alsace, and their left by Maestricht, Juliers, and the iron barrier of the Netherlands; while the Austrians had no fortified point whatever to support either of their wings. This want in a war of invasion is of incalculable importance; and the event soon proved that the fortresses of the Rhine are not less valuable as a base for offensive, than as a barrier to support defensive operations.¹

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¹ Archduke,
ii. 10, 12.
Jom. viii.
170. Th.
viii. 306,
307.

The plan of the Aulic Council was, in the north to force the passage of the Moselle, carry the war into Flanders, and rescue that flourishing province from the grasp of the Republicans. For this purpose they had brought the greater mass of their forces to the Lower Rhine. On the Upper, they proposed to lay siege to Landau, and, having driven the Republicans over the mountains on the west of the valley of the Rhine, blockade Strasburg. But for some reason which has never been divulged, they remained in a state of inactivity until the end of May, while Beaulieu with fifty thousand men was striving in vain to resist the torrent of Napoleon's conquests in Lombardy. The consequences of this delay proved fatal to the whole campaign. Hardly was the armistice denounced in the end of May, when an order arrived to Wurmser to detach twenty-five thousand of his best troops by the Tyrolese Alps into Italy; a deduction which, by necessarily reducing the Imperialists on the Upper Rhine to the defensive, rendered it hardly possible for the Archduke to push forward the other army towards the Moselle. There still remained, however, one hundred and fifty thousand Imperialists on the frontiers of Germany, including above forty thousand superb cavalry; a force which, if earlier brought into action, and placed under one leader, might have changed the fate of the war. The French inferiority in horse was compensated by a superiority of twenty thousand foot soldiers. The Austrians had the immense advantage of possessing two fortified places, Mayence and Mannheim on the Rhine, which gave them the means of

29.
Plans of the
Austrians.

31st May.

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debouching with equal facility on either side of that stream, while the Republicans only held a *tête-du-pont* at Dusseldorf, so far removed to the north as to be of little service in commencing operations. The events of this struggle demonstrate, in the most striking manner, the great importance of early success in war, and by what a necessary chain of consequences an inconsiderable advantage at first often determines the fate of a campaign. A single victory gained by the Austrians on the Sarre or the Moselle would have compelled the French armies to dissolve themselves in order to garrison the frontier towns; and the Directory, to defend its own territories, would have been obliged to arrest the career of Napoleon in the Italian plains; while, by taking the initiative, and carrying the war into Germany, they were enabled to leave their fortresses defenceless, and swell, by their garrisons, the invading force, which soon proved so perilous to the Austrian monarchy.¹

¹ *Iom. viii.*
173. Arch.
Charles, ii.
201.

30.
Plan of the
Republicans.

The plan of the Republicans was to move forward the army of the Sambre and Meuse by Dusseldorf, to the right bank of the Rhine, in order to threaten the communication of the Archduke with Germany, induce him to recross it, and facilitate the passage of the upper part of the stream by Moreau. In conformity with this design, KLEBER,*

Early history
of Kleber.

* Jean Baptiste Kleber was born at Strasbourg in 1754. His father was a domestic in the service of Cardinal Rohan, who became so notorious in connection with the affair of the diamond necklace; and he was at first destined for the profession of an architect, for which he evinced a considerable turn. One day at Paris, when pursuing his studies, he saw two foreigners insulted by some young men in a coffee-house; he took their part, and extricated them from the attack: in return, they offered to take him with them to Munich, to which city they belonged, and place him in the Military Academy there. The offer was too tempting to be resisted; the study of architecture was exchanged for the career of arms; and such was the progress made by the young student in his military studies, that General Kaunitz, son of the celebrated minister of the same name, invited him to Vienna, and soon after gave him a commission as sub-lieutenant in his regiment. He remained in the Austrian service from 1776 to 1785, and made his first essay in arms against the Turks; but, disgusted at length with a service in which promotion was awarded only to birth, he resigned his commission, returned to France, resumed his profession of an architect, and obtained the situation of inspector of public edifices at Belfort, which he held for six years.

The Revolution, however, called him to very different destinies. In a revolt at Belfort in 1791, he espoused the cause of the populace, whom he headed, and defeated the regiment of Royal Louis, which strove to suppress the tumult. This incident determined his future career; retreat was impossible: he had now no chance of safety but in gaining impunity by advancing with the Revolution. In 1792 he entered as a private into a regiment of volunteers of the Upper Rhine, in which his lofty stature, martial air, fearless demeanour, and previous acquaintance with war, soon gained him consideration, and elevated him to the rank of adjutant-major, in which

on the 30th May, crossed the Rhine at Dusseldorf, and, with twenty-five thousand men, began to press the Austrians on the Sieg, where the Archduke had only twenty thousand, the great bulk of his army, sixty thousand strong, being on the right bank, in front of Mayence. The Republicans succeeded in defeating the advanced posts of the Imperialists, crossed the Sieg, turned the position of Ukerath, and drove them back to Altenkirchen. There the Austrians stood firm, and a severe action took place. General NEY, with a body of light troops, turned their left, and threatened their communications; while Kleber, having advanced through the hills of Weyersbusch, assailed their front; and SOULT* menaced their reserve at Kropach. The result of these movements was, that the Austrians were driven behind the Lahn at Limburg, with the loss of fifteen hundred prisoners, and twelve pieces of cannon.¹

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1796.

31.

They cross the Lower Rhine, and gain some success. June 4.

¹ Jom. viii. 182, and Pièces Just. No. 12. Th. viii. 308. Ney, i. 155, 177. Arch. Ch. ii. 64, 74.

capacity he acted for some time under General Custine. When that officer was brought to trial, he had the courage, which in those days required stronger nerves than to face a battery of cannon, to give evidence in his favour. The known vehemence of his Republican principles preserved him from the destruction which otherwise would have awaited him for that courageous act; and he was soon after sent as general of brigade to La Vendée, where his talents and intrepidity were experienced with fatal effect by the Royalist forces. His able conduct mainly contributed to the victories of Cholet, Mans, and Savenay, which finally broke the Vendean bands. After having made a triumphant entry into Nantes, and in effect finished the war, he was removed from his command, in consequence of the undisguised manner in which he expressed his abhorrence of the sanguinary cruelties with which the Committee of Public Salvation desolated the country after the contest was over. His unrestrained freedom of speech long prevented Kleber's promotion, as it does that in every age of really great men. Every government, monarchical, aristocratic, or republican, seeks for pliant talent, not lofty intellect. The disasters of the Republic, however, at length rendered his employment indispensable, and he received a command as general of division, in which capacity he bore a part in the battle of Fleurus, and in all the subsequent operations of the army of the Sambre and Meuse in 1795, down to the crossing of the Rhine by Jourdan in spring 1796.—See *Biographie Universelle*, xxii. 460, 462 (KLEBER).

* Jean de Dieu Soult, afterwards Marshal of France, and Duke of Dalmatia, was born at Saint Amans, in the department of Tarn, on the 29th March 1769, just a month before his great rival Wellington, and in the same year with Napoleon, Bonaparte, and so many other of the heroes of the Revolution. Descended of humble parents, he entered the army in 1785 as a private in the 23d Royal Infantry; but his intelligence and quickness having early made him conspicuous, he was appointed, in 1791, drill-sergeant to a battalion of volunteers who had been raised on the Upper Rhine, and afterwards received from Marshal Luckner his commission as sub-lieutenant in the same regiment. His talents ere long led to his being employed in important duties. He was chosen captain by the soldiers by acclamation, and soon intrusted by Custine with the command of two battalions. He was distinguished at the battle of Kaiserslautern, at the storming of the lines of Weissenberg, and the siege of Fort Louis; but it was at the battle of Fleurus that he first gave proof of his undaunted character. The brave Marceau there found himself deserted by his troops, who were flying in the

Early history of Soult.

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1796.

32.

They are
driven back
across the
Rhine by
the Arch-
duke.

16th June.

This victory produced the desired effect, by drawing the Archduke, with the greater part of his forces, across the Rhine, to succour the menaced points. On the 10th, he passed that river with thirty-two battalions and eighty squadrons, arrived in the neighbourhood of Limburg four days after, and moved, with forty-five thousand infantry and eighteen thousand cavalry, against the Republicans on the German side. Jourdan, upon this, leaving Marceau with twenty thousand men near Mayence, crossed the Rhine at Neuwied, with the bulk of his forces, to support Kleber. His intention was to cover the investment of Ehrenbreitstein, and, for this purpose, to pass the Lahn and attack Wartensleben, who commanded the advanced guard of the Imperialists; but the Archduke, resolved to take the initiative, anticipated him by a day, and commenced an attack with all his forces. The position of the Republicans was in the highest degree critical, as they were compelled to fight with the Rhine on their right flank, and between them and France, which would have exposed them to utter ruin in case of a serious reverse. The Archduke judiciously brought the mass of his forces

utmost disorder towards the Sambre, leaving the right of the army entirely uncovered. In despair, he was about to rush into the thickest of the fight, and seek death from the enemy's bayonets. At that instant Soult, breathless, came up. "You would die, Marceau," said the future antagonist of Wellington, "and leave your soldiers dishonoured; fly and seek them, bring them back to the charge; it will be more glorious to conquer with them." Marceau, struck with these words, followed his men, succeeded in rallying them, and led them back to share in the ultimate glories of the day.

After this he took part in the actions on the Ourthe and the Roer at the conclusion of the campaign of 1794, and was engaged in the blockade of Luxembourg till the surrender of that place. During the chequered campaign of 1795, he commanded a light division of three battalions and five squadrons, which rendered essential service, both in the advanced-guard during forward, and the rear-guard in retrograde movements. In the course of one of these, he was suddenly enveloped near Herborn by four thousand Austrian cavalry. Summoned to surrender to this vast superiority of horse, he set the enemy at defiance, formed his infantry in two close columns, with the cavalry in the interval between them, and in that order marched five hours, constantly fighting, in the course of which he repulsed no less than seven charges without being ever broken, or losing a gun or a standard, until he rejoined in safety the ranks of his countrymen. After ten days' repose he was again in motion, commanded in the combat of Ratte-Eig, fought on the summit of a lofty ridge then knee-deep in snow, where he inflicted a loss on the enemy of two thousand men, and took part in the battle of Freidberg, to the success of which his skill and valour powerfully contributed. His name will be found connected with almost all the great triumphs of Napoleon; and his glorious defence of the south of France against Wellington in 1813 and 1814 have secured for him a place in the very first rank of military glory.—See *Biographie des Contemporains*, xix. 255, 257 (Soult).

against the French left, and, having overwhelmed it, Jourdan was compelled to draw back all his troops to avoid being driven into the river, and completely destroyed amidst its precipitous banks. He accordingly retired to Neuwied, and recrossed the Rhine, while Kleber received orders to retire to Dusseldorf, and regain the left bank. Kray pursued him with the right wing of the Austrians, and a bloody and furious action ensued at Ukerath, which at length terminated to the disadvantage of the French, in consequence of the impetuous charges of the Imperial cavalry. Kleber indignantly continued his retreat, and regained the intrenched camp around the *tête-du-pont* at Dusseldorf.¹

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1796.

¹ Arch. Ch.
ii. 74, 92.
Jom. viii.
185, 194.
Th. viii. 309.
Ney, 180,
197.

Meanwhile the army on the Upper Rhine, under the command of MOREAU, had commenced offensive operations. This great general, born in 1763, at Morlaix, in Brittany, was the son of a respectable advocate in that town, and had been originally bred to the bar; but, while yet engaged in that profession, he was appointed *Prevot-de-droit* at Rennes, in which situation his solid talents, great acquirements, and courteous manners, gave him an entire ascendant over the students of law in that provincial capital, who styled him, in 1787, on occasion of its contest with the crown, "General of the Parliament." Tempering at the same time prudence with firmness, he succeeded in calming the effervescence of the young men, and subduing a revolt which otherwise might have been attended with serious consequences. When the Revolution broke out, he organised a company of artillery volunteers, of which he was elected captain. Weary of pacific service, and finding the legal profession wholly destroyed by the public convulsions, he solicited a situation in 1792 in the gendarmerie or *mounted police*. Happily his application was unsuccessful; and having soon after enlisted in a regiment of the line, he made his debut in war under Dumourier in the campaign of Flanders in 1793. His intelligence, however, and sagacity, speedily occasioned his promotion; he was raised by the suffrages of the soldiers to the rank of colonel; before the end of the campaign he was a brigadier-general: and in the following year, on the recommendation of Pichegru, he was appointed general of division,² and intrusted with an important

33.
Early his-
tory of
Moreau.

² Biog. Univ.
xxx. 86.
(Moreau.)

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1796.

command in the maritime districts of Flanders, and, after various lesser successes, succeeded in planting the Republican standards on the important fort of Ecluse on the Scheldt.

34.
His first
exploits as a
general.

At the moment that Moreau was rendering these important services to France, the Jacobins of Brest sent his father to the scaffold. That respectable old man, who, by his beneficence to the unfortunate in Morlaix, where he resided, had gained the surname of the "Father of the Poor," had excited the jealousy of the Revolutionists in his province, by his humanity in administering the affairs of some emigrants, who, but for his probity, would have lost their all. This tragic event confirmed his son in the repugnance which he already felt for the atrocities of the Jacobins, and determined him to devote himself exclusively to the career of arms. He commanded the right wing of Pichegru's army in the winter campaign of 1794, which procured for the Republicans the possession of Holland. When that general was transferred from the scene of his Batavian triumphs to the command of the army of the Rhine and Moselle, he received the command in chief of the army of Holland; and, by the wisdom and justice of his administration, attracted universal esteem, the more so, as it exhibited such a contrast to that of the commissioners of the Convention. After the dismissal of Pichegru from the command of the army in Alsace, in the winter of 1795, he was appointed his successor; and two traits of his conduct in that campaign, overlooked in the whirl of its important events, deserve to be recorded, as marking at once the probity and generosity of his character. When compelled to retreat by the admirable skill of the Archduke Charles from the heart of Bavaria to the Upper Rhine, he preferred forcing his way sword in hand through the defiles of the Black Forest, occupied by the enemy, to violating the neutrality of the Swiss territory near the lake of Constance, which would have given him the means of a bloodless retreat. And when his rival, Napoleon, was hard pressed by the Austrians under Alvinzti in Italy, he detached a corps across the Tyrol Alps to reinforce him, sufficient again to chain victory to the standards of the army of Italy. "O Moreau!" said Carnot on hearing of this¹—"O my dear Fabius, how great you were in that

¹ Blog. Univ.
xxx. 87, 88.
(Moreau.)

circumstance! how superior to the wretched rivalries of generals, which so often cause the best laid enterprises to miscarry!"

MOREAU was the most consummate general who appeared in the French armies in that age of glory. Without the eagle glance or vehement genius of Napoleon, he was incomparably more judicious and circumspect: he never could have made the campaign of Italy in 1796, or in Champagne in 1814; but neither would he have incurred the disasters of the Moscow retreat, nor lost his crown by the obstinacy of his grasp of Spain. Like Fabrus, Epaminondas, and Turenne, he trusted nothing to chance, laid his plans with consummate ability, and, calculating with equal precision the probabilities of success or disaster, succeeded in achieving the former without incurring the latter. But he was great as a general alone—as a man he was only good. He had no turn for political affairs, and was wholly unfit to be the head of a party. Gifted with rare sagacity, an imperturbable coolness in presence of danger, and a rapid *coup-d'œil* in the field of battle, he was eminently qualified for military success; but his modesty, indecision of mind, and retiring habits, rendered him unfit to cope in political life with the energy and ambition of Napoleon. He was, accordingly, illustrious as a general, but unfortunate as a statesman; a sincere Republican, he disdained to accept elevation at the expense of the public freedom; and after vanquishing the Imperialists at Hohenlinden, he sunk before the audacity and fortune of his younger and less scrupulous rival.¹

On arriving at the command, after the dismissal of Pichegru, he applied himself assiduously, with the aid of Regnier, to reorganise and restore the army, whose spirit the disasters of the preceding campaign had considerably weakened. The French centre, thirty thousand strong, cantoned at the foot of the Vosges Mountains, was placed under the orders of DESAIX;* the left, under St

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35.
His character as a general.

¹ Th. viii.
307, 310.
Jom. viii.
169, 195.
Arch. Ch.
ii. 19. Biog.
Univ. xlii.
90, 91.

36.
Organisation of his army.

* Louis Charles Desaix was born at St Hilaire in 1768, of a noble family. At the age of fifteen he entered the regiment of Bretagne, and was soon distinguished by his severe and romantic character. In 1791, he was appointed aide-de-camp to General Victor de Broglie. His first action in the revolutionary army was in the combat of Latenbourg, in 1793, in which his heroic courage was so conspicuous, that it procured for him rapid promotion. In 1796, he commanded one of Moreau's divisions. "Of all the generals I ever had under me," said Napoleon, "Desaix and Kleber possessed

Early history of Desaix

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1796.

1 Arch. Ch.
ji. 24. Jom.
viii. 196, 197.
St Cyr, iii.
33, 37.

CYR,* had its headquarters at Deuxponts; while the right, under Moreau in person, occupied Strasburg and Huningen. The Austrians, in like manner, were in three divisions; the right wing, twenty-two thousand strong, was encamped in the neighbourhood of Kayerslautern, and communicated with the Archduke Charles; the centre, under the orders of Starray, amounting to twenty-three thousand infantry and nine thousand horse, was at Muschbach and Mannheim; while the left wing, comprehending twenty-four thousand infantry and seven thousand cavalry, extended along the course of the Rhine from Philipsburg to Bâle. Thus, notwithstanding all their misfortunes, the Imperialists still adhered to the ruinous system of extending their forces; a plan of operations destined to bring about all but the ruin of the monarchy.¹

Moreau resolved to pass the Rhine at Strasburg, as that

the greatest talents—especially Desaix, as Kleber only loved war as it was the means of procuring him riches and pleasures; whereas Desaix loved glory for itself, and despised every thing else. Desaix was wholly wrapt up in war and glory. To him riches and pleasures were valueless, nor did he give them a moment's thought. He despised comfort and convenience; wrapt in a cloak, he threw himself under a gun, and slept as contentedly as in a palace. Upright and honest in all his proceedings, he was called by the Arabs the Just Sultan. Kleber and Desaix were an irreparable loss to the French army."—O'MEARA, i. 237, 238, and *Biog. Univ.* xi. 128 (DESAIX).

Early history
of St Cyr.

* Laurent Gouvion St Cyr, afterwards Marshal and Peer of France, was born at Toul on the 13th April 1761. When called upon to decide upon his profession, he declined the army, to which his father had destined him, on account of the slow promotion, and indolent life of the officers in peace, and took to painting, in pursuance of which he travelled to Italy, and studied some years in Rome. Having completed his preparatory education, he returned to Paris, where he began to practise his art in the work-shop of the painter Brenet: but the 10th of August soon arrived; the fine arts were forgotten in the whirl of the Revolution: and the young painter, abandoning his pacific pursuits, enrolled himself in one of the numerous corps of volunteers which were then forming in the capital. There he was speedily raised, by the voice of his comrades, to the rank of captain, and sent, in November 1792, to the army of the Lower Rhine, with which he continued to act down to the peace of Campo-Formio. It is to this circumstance that we owe the valuable Memoirs which he has left on that period of the war, and which, published in 1831, accompanied by a magnificent Atlas, have become one of the most important military records of the Revolution. His name will frequently appear in the following pages, particularly in Catalonia in 1809 and 1810, and during the campaigns of Moscow and Germany in 1812 and 1813. His talents for war were remarkable. Few of his generals possessed more of the confidence of Napoleon, and none has left such scientific and luminous military memoirs on the campaigns in which he was engaged. His abilities were of the solid and judicious, rather than the showy and dazzling kind; his understanding was excellent, his penetration keen, his judgment sound, his survey of affairs comprehensive, and he was brave and tenacious of purpose; but he had not the eagle glance of Napoleon, nor the heroic energy of Ney; and he was better qualified to make a circumspect commander-in-chief than a brilliant leader of a corps of an army.—See *Vie de St Cyr*, prefixed to his Memoirs, vol. i. 1-12; and *Biographie des Contemporains*, viii. 263 and 264, (GOUVION DE ST CYR.)

powerful fortress was an excellent point of departure ; while the numerous wooded islands which there interrupted the course of the river, afforded every facility for the concealment of the project. The fortress of Kehl on the opposite shore, being negligently guarded, lay open to surprise, and, once secured, promised the means of a safe passage to the whole army. The Austrians on the Upper Rhine were, from the very beginning of the campaign, reduced to the defensive, in consequence of the large detachment made under Wurmser to the Tyrol ; while the invasion of Germany by the army of Jourdan spread the belief that it was in that quarter that the serious attack of the Republicans was to be made. To mislead the Imperialists still further as to his real design, Moreau made a general attack on their intrenchments at Mannheim, which had the effect of inducing them to withdraw the greater part of their forces to the right bank, leaving only fifteen battalions to guard the *tête-du-pont* on the French side. Meanwhile Wurmser having departed at the head of twenty-eight thousand choice troops for Italy, the command of both armies devolved on the Archduke. Moreau deemed this juncture favourable for the execution of his design upon Kehl, and accordingly, on the evening of the 23d, the gates of Strasburg were suddenly closed, all intercourse with the German shore was rigidly prohibited, and columns of troops marched in all directions towards the point of embarkation.¹

The points selected for this hazardous operation were Gamsheim and Kehl. Twelve thousand men were collected at the first point, and sixteen thousand at the second, both detachments being under the orders of Desaix ; while the forces of the Imperialists were so scattered, that they could not assemble above seventeen thousand men in forty-eight hours in any quarter that might be menaced. At midnight, the troops defiled, in different columns and profound silence, towards the stations of embarkation ; while false attacks, attended with much noise and constant discharges of artillery, were made at other places, to distract the attention of the enemy. At half-past one Desaix gave the signal for departure ; two thousand five hundred men embarked in silence, and rowed across the arm of the Rhine to the island of Ehslar Rhin, which was

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37.

Passage of
the Rhine by
Moreau.

23d June.

1 TH. viii.

310, 311.

Jom. viii.

199, 200.

38.

Admirable
skill shown
in the pas-
sage, which
proves suc-
cessful.

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occupied by the Imperialists. They fell, without firing a shot, with so much impetuosity upon their videttes, that the Germans fled in disorder to the right bank, without thinking of cutting the bridges of boats which connected the island with the shore. Thither they were speedily followed by the Republicans, who, although unsupported by cavalry or artillery, ventured to advance into the plain, and approach the ramparts of Kehl. With heroic resolution, but the most prudent course in such circumstances, the commander sent back the boats instantly to the French side, to bring over reinforcements, leaving this little band alone and unsupported, in the midst of the enemy's army. Their advanced guard was speedily assailed by the Swabian contingent, greatly superior in numbers, which was encamped in that neighbourhood; but they were repulsed by the steadiness of the French infantry, supported by two pieces of artillery, which they had captured on first landing on the shore. Before six o'clock in the morning, a new detachment of equal strength arrived, a flying bridge was established between the island and the left bank, and the Republicans found themselves in such strength, that they advanced to the attack of the intrenchments of Kehl. They were carried at the point of the bayonet, the troops of Swabia, intrusted with the defence, flying with such precipitation, that they lost thirteen pieces of cannon and seven hundred men. On the following day a bridge of boats was established between Strasburg and Kehl, and the whole army passed over in safety. Such was the passage of the Rhine at Kehl, which at the time was celebrated as an exploit of the most glorious character. Without doubt the secrecy, rapidity, and decision with which it was carried into effect, merit the highest eulogium. But the weakness and dispersion of the enemy's forces rendered it an enterprise of comparatively little hazard; and it was greatly inferior, both in point of difficulty and danger, to the crossing of the same river in the following campaign at Diersheim, or the passages of the Danube at Wagram, and of the Berezina at Studenki by Napoleon.¹

¹ Jom. viii.
209, 211.
Th viii. 312,
313. St Cyr,
iii. 33, 46.
Arch. Ch. ii.
102, 110.

39.
Cautious
movements
of Moreau.

Moreau had now the fairest opportunity of destroying the Austrian army on the Upper Rhine, by a series of diverging attacks, similar to those by which Napoleon had discomfited the army of Beaulieu in Piedmont. He had

effected a passage, with a superior force, into the centre of the enemy's line; and, by rapid movements, might have struck, right and left, as weighty blows as that great captain dealt out at Dego and Montenotte. But the French general, however consummate a commander, had not the fire or energy by which his younger rival was actuated, and trusted for success rather to skilful combinations or methodical arrangements, than to those master-strokes which are attended with peril, but frequently determine over fortune by the magnitude of the losses they inflict on the enemy, and the intensity of the passions which they awaken among mankind. Having at length collected all his divisions on the right bank, Moreau, at the end of June, advanced to the foot of the mountains of the Black Forest, at the head of seventy-one thousand men. This celebrated chain forms a mass of rocky hills covered with fir, separating the valley of the Rhine from that of the Neckar, and pierced only by narrow ravines or glens. The Swabian contingent, ten thousand strong, was already posted at Renchen, once so famous in the wars of Turenne, occupying the entrance of the defiles which lead through the mountains. They were attacked by the Republicans, and driven from their position with the loss of ten pieces of cannon, and eight hundred men. Meanwhile, the Imperialists were collecting their scattered forces with the utmost haste, to make head against the formidable enemy who had thus burst into the centre of their line. The Archduke Charles had no sooner received the intelligence, than he resolved to hasten in person, to arrest the advance of an army threatening to fall upon his line of communications, and possibly get the start of him on the Danube. For this purpose he set off on the 26th, with twenty-four battalions and thirty-nine squadrons, from the banks of the Lahn, and advanced by forced marches towards the Black Forest, while the scattered divisions of Würmser's army were converging towards the menaced point.¹

Moreau's plan was to descend the valley of the Rhine, with his centre and left wing, under the command of Desaix and St Cyr; while his right, under Ferino, attacked and carried the defiles of the Black Forest, and pushed on to the banks of the Neckar. The Austrians on the Upper Rhine and the Murg were about forty-eight thousand

CHAP.
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1796.

¹ Arch. Ch.
ii. 116, 125.
St Cyr, iii.
50, 71. Jom.
viii. 212, 218.
Th. viii. 314,
315.

40.
Indecisive
actions on
the Murg.

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1796.

strong; while the Archduke was hastening with half that number to their support. Previous to advancing to the northward, Moreau detached some brigades from his centre to clear the right flank of the army, and drive the enemy from the heights of the Black Forest, which was successfully accomplished. Meanwhile, the left wing continuing to descend the valley of the Danube, through a broken country, intersected with woods and ravines, approached the corps of Latour, who defended the banks of the Murg with twenty-seven thousand men. He was attacked there by the centre of the Republicans, with nearly the same force, the left under St Cyr not having yet arrived, and after an indecisive engagement, the Austrians retired in the best order, covered by their numerous cavalry, leaving to their antagonists no other advantage but the possession of the field of battle. Important reinforcements speedily came up on both sides; the Archduke arrived with twenty-four thousand men to the support of the Imperialists, while Moreau counterbalanced the acquisition, by bringing up St Cyr, with his whole left wing, to his aid. The forces on the two sides were now nearly equal, amounting on either to about fifty thousand men; and their situation was nearly the same, both being at right angles to the Rhine, and extending from that stream through a marshy and woody plain, to the mountains of the Black Forest.¹

¹ Th. viii.
318. Arch.
Ch. ii. 134.
138. Jom.
viii. 220.
225. Personal observation.

41.
The French gain success on the Imperial right.

9th July.

The Archduke, who felt the value of time, and was apprehensive of being speedily recalled to the defence of the Lower Rhine, already threatened by Jourdan, resolved to commence the attack, and, in order to render his numerous cavalry of service, to engage as much as possible in the plain. For this purpose he advanced the Saxons on his left to turn the French right in the mountains, and threatened their rear, strengthened the plateau of Rothen-sol, where his left centre rested, advanced his centre to Malsch, and arranged his formidable cavalry, supported by ten battalions, so as to press the left of the Republicans in the plain of the Rhine. His attack was fixed for the 10th July; but Moreau, who deemed it hazardous to remain on the defensive, anticipated him by a general assault on the preceding day. Wisely judging that it was of importance to avoid the plain, where the numerous cavalry of the Imperialists promised to be of such advantage, he entirely

drew back his own left, and directed the weight of his force by his right against the Austrian position in the mountains. St Cyr, who commanded the Republicans in that quarter, was charged with the assault of the plateau of Rothensol, an elevated plain in the midst of the rocky ridges of the Black Forest, the approaches to which were obstructed by shrubs, scaurs, and underwood, and which was occupied by six Austrian battalions. These brave troops repulsed successive attacks of the French columns; but having, on the defeat of the last, pursued the assailants into the rugged and woody ground on the declivity of the heights, their ranks became broken, and St Cyr, returning to the charge, routed the Imperialists, carried the position, and drove back their left towards Pforzheim. Meanwhile Desaix, with the French centre, commenced a furious attack on the village of Malsch, which, after being taken and retaken several times, finally remained in the power of the Austrians. Their numerous cavalry now deployed in the plain; but the French kept cautiously under cover of the woods and thickets with which the country abounded; and the Austrians, notwithstanding their great superiority in horse, were unable to obtain any further success than repulsing the attacks on their centre and right, towards the banks of the Rhine.¹

The relative situation of the contending parties was now very singular. Moreau had dislodged the Imperialists from the mountains, and by throwing forward his right, he had it in his power to cut them off from the line of communication with the Hereditary States, and menace their retreat to the valley of the Danube. On the other hand, by so doing, he was himself exposed to the danger of being separated from his base in the valley of the Rhine, seeing Desaix crushed by the victorious centre and numerous cavalry of the Austrians, and St Cyr isolated and endangered in the mountains. A general of Napoleon's resolution and ability would possibly have derived from this combination of circumstances the means of achieving the most splendid successes; but the Archduke was prevented from following so energetic a course by the critical circumstances of the Austrian dominions, which lay exposed and unprotected to the attacks of the enemy, and the perilous situation in which he might be placed in case

¹ Th. viii.
320. Jom.
viii. 227, 233.
Arch. Ch. ii.
138, 149. St
Cyr, iii. 68,
69.

42.
The Arch-
duke re-
solves to
retreat, and
retires
through the
Black
Forest into
Bavaria.

CHAP.
XXI.

1796.

14th to 28th
July.

¹ Arch. Ch.
ii. 148, 149,
175. Jom.
viii. 234, 237.
Th. viii. 322,
326. St Cyr,
ii. 54, 59.

43.
Operations
on the Low-
er Rhine.
1st July.

of disaster, with a hostile army on one side, and a great river lined with the enemy's fortresses on the other. For these reasons he resolved to forego the splendid, to pursue the prudent course; to retire from the frontier to the interior of Germany, and to regain by the valleys of the Maine and the Neckar the plain of the Danube, which river, supported by the fortresses of Ulm and Ratisbon, was the true frontier of Austria, and brought him as much nearer his own, as it withdrew the enemy from their resources. With this view he retired, by a forced march, in the evening, to Pforzheim, without being disquieted in his movement; and, after throwing garrisons into Philipsburg and Mannheim, prepared to abandon the valley of the Rhine, and retreat by the Neckar into the Bavarian plains. Agreeably to this plan, the Imperialists broke up on the 14th from Pforzheim, and retired slowly and in the best order towards Stutgardt and the right bank of the Neckar. By so doing, they drew nearer to the army of Wartensleben, and gained the great object of obtaining a central and interior line of communication, from which the Archduke soon derived the most brilliant advantages. Meanwhile Moreau advanced his right centre under St Cyr, through the mountains to Pforzheim, while the right wing, under Ferino, spread itself through the Black Forest to the frontiers of Switzerland. The result was, that, by the middle of July, the Republican army covered a space of fifty leagues broad, from Stutgardt to the Lake of Constance.¹

Meanwhile important operations had taken place on the Lower Rhine. No sooner was Jourdan informed of the passage of the Rhine at Kehl, and the departure of the Archduke to reinforce the army of Wurmser, than he hastened to recross the same river at Dusseldorf and Neuwied, advancing, as he had always before done, towards the Lahn, with a view to debouche into the valley of the Maine. The Imperialists, under Wartensleben, now consisted only of twenty-five thousand infantry and eleven thousand cavalry; a force totally inadequate to make head against the Republicans, who amounted, even after the necessary deductions to blockade Mayence, Cassel, and Ehrenbreitstein, to fifty thousand men. At the period of the passage of the river, the Austrian army was scattered over a long line, and might have been easily beaten in

detail by an enterprising enemy; but Jourdan allowed them to concentrate their troops behind the Lahn, without deriving any advantage from his superiority of force and their exposed situation. After some inconsiderable skirmishing, the Republicans crossed that river; and the Austrians having stood firm in the position of Friedberg, a partial action ensued, which terminated to the disadvantage of the latter, who, after a vigorous resistance, finding their right flank turned by Lefebvre, retreated with the loss of two pieces of cannon and twelve hundred men. After this success, Jourdan advanced to the banks of the Maine, and by a bombardment of two days, compelled his adversaries to evacuate the great city of Frankfort, and retire altogether to the right bank of that river. The Austrians now drew all their disposable troops out of the fortress of Mayence, and raised their force under Wartensleben to thirty thousand infantry and fifteen thousand cavalry, while Jourdan's army on the right bank of the Maine was swelled by the addition of some of the blockading corps to forty-six thousand of the former, and eight thousand of the latter.¹

The Directory, in prescribing the conduct of the campaign to the generals, were constantly influenced by the desire to turn at once both flanks of the enemy: an injudicious design, which, by giving an eccentric direction to their forces, and preventing them from communicating with or assisting each other, led to all the disasters which signalised the conclusion of the campaign. On the other hand, the Archduke, by giving a concentric direction to his forces in their retreat, and ultimately arriving at a point where he could fall with an overwhelming force, on either adversary, ably prepared all the triumphs which effaced its early reverses. In conformity with these different plans—while Moreau was extending his right wing to the foot of the Alps, pressing through the defiles of the Albis and the Black Forest into the valley of the Danube, and Jourdan was slowly advancing up the shores of the Maine towards Bohemia—the Archduke regained the right bank of the Neckar, and Wartensleben the left bank of the Maine; movements which, by bringing them into close proximity with each other, rendered unavailing all the superiority of their enemies. In truth, nothing but

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10th July.

1 Th. viii.
323. Jom.
viii. 264, 278.
Arch. Ch. ii.
150, 175.
St Cyr, iii.
89, 92.

44.
Erroneous
plan of the
campaign by
the Direc-
tory.

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1796.

¹ Arch. Ch.
ii. 176, 179.
Jom. viii.
282, 283. St
Cyr, iii. 93,
100.

45.
Admirable
plan of the
Archduke
to counter-
act it. He
retires
through the
Black
Forest.

14th July.

17th, 25th,
and 27th
July.

² Jom. viii.
238, 241.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 191, 215.
St Cyr, iii.
105, 113.

this able direction of the retreating, and injudicious dispersion of the advancing force, could have enabled the Imperialists at all to make head against their enemies: for, independent of the deduction of twenty-five thousand men dispatched under Wurmser into Italy, the Austrians were weakened by thirty thousand men, whom the Archduke was obliged to leave in the different garrisons on the Rhine; so that the force under his immediate command consisted only of forty thousand infantry, and eighteen thousand cavalry, while Moreau was at the head of sixty-five thousand of the former force, and six thousand of the latter.¹

But the admirable plan of operations which that able general sketched out at Pforzheim, "to retreat slowly, and disputing every inch of ground, without hazarding a general engagement, until the two retiring armies were so near, that they could unite, and he might fall with a superior force upon one or other of his adversaries," ultimately rendered abortive all this great superiority, and threw back the French forces with disgrace and disaster to the Rhine. Having assembled all his parks of artillery, and thrown provisions into the fortresses, which were to be left to their own resources during his short stay at Pforzheim, the Archduke commenced his retreat, during which his force was still further weakened by the withdrawing of the Saxon and Swabian contingents, amounting to ten thousand men, the government of whose states, alarmed by the advance of the Republicans, now hastened to make their separate submissions to the conquerors. By the 25th July, the Austrian forces were concentrated on the right bank of the Neckar, betwixt Cronstadt and Esslingen. They were there attacked, on the following morning, by Moreau, with his whole centre and left wing; and after an obstinate engagement, both parties remained on the field of battle. Next day the Imperialists retired in two columns, under the Archduke and Hotze, through the mountains of Alb, which separate the valley of the Neckar from that of the Danube. The one followed the valley of the Rems and the route of Scorndorf, the other the valley of the Filz. Their united force did not now exceed twenty-five thousand infantry and ten thousand cavalry.² Moreau, followed them nearly in a parallel line; and

on the 23d debouched into the plains near the sources of the Danube, and the upper extremity of the valley of Rems.

The Archduke took a position at the top of the long ridge of Bismarkirch, with the design of falling upon the heads of the enemy's columns, as they issued from the valleys into the plain, and in order to gain time for the evacuation of the magazines of Ulm. The formidable nature of his position there compelled Moreau to halt for six days to concentrate his forces. Six days afterwards the Imperial general resumed his retreat, which was continued with uncommon firmness, and in the best order, till he reached the Danube, where he prepared to resume the offensive. He there found himself in communication with his left wing, under Frœlich, which had retired through the Black Forest, and amounted to fourteen thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry; while the corresponding wing of the Republicans, under Ferino, approached Moreau, and raised his force to fifty-eight thousand infantry and seven thousand horse. He advanced in order of battle to Neresheim; but the left wing, under Frœlich, did not arrive in time to take any part in the action which there ensued. His design in so doing, was to gain time for the evacuation of his magazines at Ulm, and be enabled to continue his retreat with more leisure towards Wartensleben, who was now falling back towards the Naab: but as he gave battle with his rear to the river, he ran the risk of total destruction in case of defeat. By a rapid movement, he succeeded in forcing back and turning the right of Moreau, and pressing forward with his left wing, got into his rear, and caused such an alarm, that all the parks of ammunition retreated in haste from the field of battle. But the centre, under St Cyr, stood firm; and the Austrian force being disunited into several columns, over a space of ten leagues, the Archduke was unable to take advantage of his success, so as to gain a decisive victory. Meanwhile Moreau, nowise intimidated by the defeat of his right wing, or the alarm in his rear, strengthened his centre by his reserve, and vigorously repulsed all the attacks of the enemy; and at two o'clock in the afternoon the firing ceased at all points, without any decisive success having been gained by either party, both of whom had to lament a loss of three thousand men.¹ On the day following, the Imperialists recrossed the Danube without being disquieted by the

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46.

Indecisive
action at
Neresheim.

11th Aug.

¹ Jom. viii.
359, 360, 367.
Arch. Ch. ii.
279, 281.
Jom. viii.
220, 255.
St Cyr, iii.
144, 174.

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enemy, and broke down all the bridges over that river as far as Donawerth. Meanwhile Frœlich retreated through the Forest, followed by Ferino, between whose forces several bloody but indecisive actions took place. But more important events were now approaching, and those decisive strokes about to be struck, which saved Germany and determined the fate of the campaign.

47.
Operations
of Jourdan.
He advances
into Fran-
conia.
17th and
18th July.

Jourdan, after having remained a few days at Frankfort, and levied a heavy contribution on that flourishing city, prepared to resume his march, in order to co-operate with Moreau in the advance into the empire. He commenced his march, with forty-seven thousand men, up the valley of the Maine, on the great road to Wurtzburg; while Wartensleben retired, with a force somewhat inferior, through the forest of Spessart, to the neighbourhood of that town. Wurtzburg soon after surrendered to the invaders, and the latter general retired successively to Zeil, Bamberg, and Forcheim, when a sharp action ensued between the cavalry of the two armies, in which the French honourably resisted a superior force. From thence the Austrians continued their retreat towards the Naab; and after bloody actions at Neukirchen, Sulzbach, and Wolfering, in which no decisive success was obtained by either party, crossed that river, and finally arrested their retrograde movement on the 18th August. The converging direction of the retiring columns of the two Austrian armies might have apprised so experienced an officer as Jourdan of the object of the Archduke, and the danger which he ran by continuing any further his advance; but he did not conceive himself at liberty to deviate from the orders of the Directory; and instead of interposing between their approaching armies, continued his eccentric movement to turn their outermost flank.¹

¹ Arch. Ch.
ii. 260, 265.
Jom. viii.
283, 301.
Jourdan,
50, 89.

48.
The Arch-
duke joins
Wartensle-
ben, and
defeats
Jourdan at
Amberg.
16th Aug.

The time had now arrived when the Archduke deemed it safe to put in practice his long-meditated movement for the relief of Wartensleben. In the middle of August he set out from the environs of Neuburg on the Danube, with twenty-eight thousand men, and moved northwards towards the Naab, leaving General Latour with thirty-five thousand to make head during his absence against Moreau. He arrived on that river on the 20th, and orders were immediately given for attacking the enemy. By the junction of the corps under the Archduke with that under

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Wartensleben, their united force was raised to sixty-three thousand men ; while the troops of Jourdan's army opposed to them, did not exceed, after the losses it had sustained, forty-five thousand. Thus this young prince had solved the most difficult and important problem in war, that of accumulating, with forces upon the whole inferior, a decided superiority at the decisive point. Bernadotte, who commanded the advanced guard of Jourdan's army, which had crossed the ridge of hills forming the northern boundary of the valley of the Danube, had taken post at Teining. He was there attacked by the Archduke, and, after an obstinate resistance, driven back into the mountains he had recently passed, which separate the valley of the Maine from that of the Danube ; while Hotze, who came up towards the close of the action, pursued his discomfited troops to the gates of Neumark. Early on the following morning the Austrians resumed the pursuit, and drove the Republicans from that town, so far back, that they found themselves on the flank of Jourdan's army on the Naab, which was no sooner informed of these disasters, than it retired to Amberg. Leaving Hotze to pursue the remains of Bernadotte's army towards Altdorf, the Archduke turned with the bulk of his forces upon Jourdan ; and having put himself in communication with Wartensleben, concerted with him a general attack upon the main body of the Republicans at Amberg. The Austrians, under the Archduke, advanced in three columns ; and when the soldiers perceived, far distant on the horizon to the northward, the fire of Wartensleben's lines, the importance of whose co-operation the whole army understood, opening on the enemy's flank, nothing could restrain their impetuosity, and loud shouts announced the arrival of the long wished-for moment of victory. The French made but a feeble resistance ; assailed at once in front and flank, they fell back to the plateau in the rear of their position, and owed their safety to the firmness with which General NEY* sustained the attacks of the enemy with the rear-guard.¹

1 Arch. Ch.
ii. 26, 43.
Jom. ix. 16,
17. Jourdan,
90, 110.

* MICHEL NEY, the bravest hero whom France produced in that age of glory, was born on 17th January 1769, in the same year with Wellington, Lannes, and so many other illustrious men of the Revolution. He was the son of a cooper at Sarce-Louis, who had formerly served in the army ; but though his father wished him to become a miner, his ardent and aspiring disposition led him at sixteen to enlist in a regiment of hussars, in which he was a non-commissioned officer when the Revolution broke out. His extreme intrepidity, coolness in danger, and eminent talent in the field, then

Early history
of Ney.

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49.

Dangerous
situation of
Jourdan.

1st Sept.

1 Th. viii.
390, 408.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 43, 106.
Jourdan,
130, 146.
Ney, i. 208,
239. Jom.
ix. 19.

50.

He is again
routed near
Wurtzburg.

The situation of Jourdan was now in the highest degree critical. By this success at Amberg, the Archduke had got upon his direct road to Nuremberg, through which his retreat necessarily lay, and he was in consequence compelled to fall back through the mountains which separate the Naab from the Maine by cross roads, with all his baggage and parks of artillery. During this critical operation, the firmness and discipline of the French troops alone saved them from total destruction. Ney with the rearguard, continued to make head against the numerous cavalry of the enemy, and after a painful passage of six days, during which they were pressed with the utmost vigour, and incurred great dangers, they at length extricated themselves from the mountains, and reached Schweinfurt on the Maine, in the deepest dejection, at the end of August. Hotze passed that river on the 1st September, and soon after his advanced guard made itself master of Wurtzburg; while the Archduke conducted the bulk of his forces to the right bank of the river. Jourdan, deeming an action indispensable in order to obtain some respite for his retreating columns, prepared himself for a general attack on his pursuers, at the same time that the Archduke was collecting his forces for an action on his own part. The courage and vivacity of the Republican soldiers appeared again when they faced the enemy, and they prepared with the utmost alacrity to occupy all the positions which were deemed necessary before commencing the battle. On the 2d September both parties were engaged in completing their preparations, and on the 3d the battle decisive of the fate of Germany took place.¹

The French army was drawn up on the right bank of the Maine, from Wurtzburg to Schweinfurt; partly on a series of heights which formed the northern barrier of the valley, and partly on the plains which extended from their foot to the shores of the river. Jourdan imagined soon became conspicuous: he was rapidly promoted by the election of the soldiers in his own regiment, and ere long was first appointed aide-de-camp to General De Lallemand, and afterwards adjutant-general to General Kleber. It was in this latter capacity that he was engaged in the campaign of 1796 in Germany, in the course of which he repeatedly distinguished himself, and was appointed general of brigade. His character will more fully find a place in a subsequent chapter, after his numerous great and heroic deeds have been recounted; but the reader may mark him even now as one of the most distinguished of Napoleon's lieutenants, and one whose tragic fate has given a melancholy interest to his memory.—*Ney's Memoirs*, i. 1, 36, and *Biographie Universelle* (Ney), xxxi. 196.

that he had only to contend with a part of the Austrian force, and that the Archduke had returned in person to make head against the Republicans on the Danube; but instead of that, he had rapidly brought his columns to the right bank, and was prepared to combat his antagonist with superior forces. A thick fog, which concealed the armies from each other, favoured the motions of the Imperialists, and when the sun broke through the clouds at eleven o'clock, it glittered on the numerous squadrons of the Austrians, drawn up in double lines on the meadows adjoining the river. The action commenced by Kray attacking the left flank of the French, while Lichtenstein spread himself out in the plain, followed by Wartensleben, who threw himself at the head of the cavalry into the river, and followed close after the infantry, who had defiled along the bridge. The French general, Grenier, who was stationed at the menaced point, made a vigorous resistance with the Republican cavalry and light infantry; but the reserve of the Austrian cuirassiers having been brought up, Jourdan was obliged to support the line by his reserve of cavalry. A desperate charge of horse took place, in which the Imperialists were at first repulsed, but the reserve of Austrian cuirassiers having assailed the Republican squadrons when disordered by success, they were broken, thrown into confusion, and driven behind the lines of their infantry. Meanwhile the grenadiers of Werneck, united to the corps under Starray, routed the French centre, and Kray drove the division of Grenier entirely off the field into the wood of Gramchatz. Victory declared for the Imperialists at all points; and Jourdan esteemed himself fortunate in being able to reach the forests which stretched from Gramchatz to Arnheim, without being broken by the redoubtable Austrian squadrons.¹

¹ Jom. ix.
36. Arch.
Ch. iii. 99,
116. Th.
viii. 409, 410.
Jourdan,
160, 172.
Ney, i. 216.
Personal ob-
servation.

Such was the battle of Wurtzburg, which delivered Germany and determined the fate of the campaign. The trophies of the victors were by no means commensurate to these momentous results, amounting only to seven pieces of cannon and a few prisoners. But it produced a most important effect upon the spirit of the two armies, elevating the Imperial as much as it depressed the Republican forces, and procuring for the Archduke the possession

51.
Great effects
of this vic-
tory.

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¹ Arch. Ch.
iii. 116, 117.
Jom. ix. 36,
37.

of the direct line of communication from the Maine to the Rhine. Disastrous as it was in its consequences, the battle itself was highly honourable to the defeated army; for they had to contend with thirty thousand men of all arms, against thirty-one thousand infantry, and thirteen thousand splendid cavalry.¹

52.
Continued
and disastrous
retreat
of Jourdan.

After this disaster, Jourdan had no alternative but to retire behind the Lahn, a position in which he might rally round his standards the force under Marceau, which blockaded Mayence, and the reinforcements which were expected from the north. In doing this, however, he was obliged to retreat through the mountains of Fulda, the roads of which are as bad as the country is rugged and inhospitable. At the same time, Marceau received orders to raise the blockade of Mayence, and make all haste to join the Republican commander-in-chief behind the Lahn. The Archduke, nothing intimidated by the menacing advance of Moreau into Bavaria, wisely resolved to pursue his beaten enemy to the Rhine; but, instead of following him through the defiles of the mountains, where a resolute rearguard might have arrested an army, he determined to advance, by a parallel march, straight to the Lahn, by the great road of Aschaffenburg. The losses sustained by the Republicans in their retreat were very great. The citadel of Wurtzburg soon surrendered with eight hundred men; one hundred and twenty-two pieces of cannon, taken by them during their advance, were abandoned at Schweinfurt; sixty pieces, and an immense quantity of ammunition, at Freudenberg; and eighty-three pieces at Flushing. The peasants, who were extremely exasperated at the enormous contributions levied by the Republicans during their advance, supported by the Austrian light troops, who were detached in pursuit of the enemy, fell upon the flanks and rear of the retreating army, and cut off vast numbers of the stragglers who issued from their ranks.^{2*}

² Arch. Ch.
iii. 128, 130.
Hard. iii.
467, 468.
Jom. ix. 37,
38. Jour-
dan, 187.

The Republicans reached the Lahn in the most disorganised and miserable state on the 9th September, and

* The French themselves admit that it was the hatred inspired by their exactions which occasioned this popular exasperation against them. "The animosity of the Germans," said Carnot, in his confidential letter announcing these disasters to Napoleon, "and the unhappy consequences which have flowed from it, are a fresh and painful warning to us how speedily the relaxation of discipline becomes fatal to an army."—*Letter Confid. of the 20th September.*

four days afterwards they were joined by the blockading force from Mayence, under Marceau, fifteen thousand strong, and a division of ten thousand from the army of the north, which in some degree restored the balance of the two armies. The young prince, having concentrated his forces at Aschaffenburg, resolved to attack them in this position, and drive them behind the Rhine. The action took place on the 16th. The Austrians advanced in three columns, amounting to thirty-eight thousand infantry, and twelve thousand cavalry, having received some reinforcements from the garrison of Mayence. Under cover of a powerful fire of artillery, they forced the bridges of the Lahn, after an obstinate engagement, made themselves masters of Limburg and Dietz, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of heroism on the part of General Marceau, and defeated the enemy at all points. During the night the Republicans beat a retreat, under cover of a thick fog, which long concealed their movements from the Imperialists; and when it cleared away on the following morning, they found all their positions abandoned. The pursuit was continued with the utmost vigour during the two following days; and, on the 19th, a serious engagement took place with the rearguard at Altenkirchen, where General Marceau was severely wounded, and fell into the hands of the Imperialists. The Archduke, who admired his great military qualities, paid him the most unremitting attention; but in spite of all his care he died a few days after, and was buried with military honours amidst the tears of his generous enemies, within the Austrian camp, in front of Coblenz, amidst discharges of artillery from both armies.* Such was the demoralised

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53.

Archduke
again defeats
them, and
drives them
across the
Rhine.
16th Sept.

¹ Jom. ix.
45, 166.
Arch. Ch
iii. 178, 180.
Jourdan,
189, 220.
Th. viii. 410.
Ney, i. 228,
229.

* Francois Severin Marceau was born at Chartois on 1st May 1769, the same day with the Duke of Wellington, and in a year unusually prodigal of heroic character. His father was a village attorney, and had neglected his education; but his elder sister, who had come to supply the place of a mother, inspired him with those elevated sentiments and heroic dispositions by which he was afterwards so distinguished. His passions, however, were ardent, his habits irregular, and his temper vehement, inasmuch that his relations were glad to get him enlisted at seventeen as a common soldier in the regiment of Savoy-Carignac, in which he rapidly rose to the highest rank of a non-commissioned officer. No sooner did the Revolution break out, than he attached himself with vehemence to the popular side, mingled in the revolt on 14th July 1789, which terminated in the storming of the Bastille, and was soon after appointed inspector of the National Guard in his native town of Chartois. When the war broke out in 1792, he set out for the frontiers as commander of the National Guard of the department of the Eure and Loire. Though he distinguished himself in the very first

Early history
of Marceau.

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20th Sept.54.
Severe
struggle of
Latour with
Moreau on
the Danube.

and disjointed state of the Republican army, that notwithstanding the great reinforcements which they had received, they were totally unable to make head against the enemy. They recrossed the Rhine on the 20th at Boun and Neuwied, and were reduced to a state of total inactivity for the remainder of the campaign, having lost not less than twenty thousand men since they left the frontiers of Bohemia, by the sword, sickness, and desertion.

While the Austrian prince was pursuing this splendid career of victory on the banks of the Maine, the corps left under the command of Latour to oppose Moreau, which did not exceed thirty-four thousand men of every arm, even including the detachment of Frœlich, was sustaining an unequal conflict on the shores of the Danube. Had the French general, the moment that he received intelligence of the departure of the Archduke, followed him with the bulk of his forces, the Imperialists, placed between two fires, would have been exposed to imminent danger, and the very catastrophe which they were most anxious to avert, viz. the junction of the Republican armies in the centre of Germany, been rendered inevitable. Fortunately for the Austrians, instead of adopting so decisive a course, he resolved to advance into Bavaria, hoping thereby to effect a diversion in favour of his colleague: a fatal resolution, which, though in some degree justified by the order of the Directory to detach fifteen thousand men at the same time into the Tyrol, utterly ruined the cam-

campaign, yet he soon found the license and irregular discipline of these volunteer corps altogether unsupportable; and he, in consequence, solicited employment in the troops of the line, in which he was appointed captain of cuirassiers in the German Legion, and sent to combat the Vendéans. No sooner had he arrived at Tours, on his way to the army, than he was arrested by the Commissioners of the Convention, and made a narrow escape with his life. He afterwards, at the battle of Saumur, saved the life of Bourbotte, a member of the Convention, at the imminent hazard of his own; and this generous action having attracted universal attention, he was appointed general of brigade, at the age of twenty-four, and soon after intrusted, at the recommendation of Kleber, with the command of the northern army of the West, which he led at the assault on Mans, and the fatal rout of Savenay.

Here, however, a new peril, greater than the bayonets of the Vendéans, awaited him. During the sack of Mans, a young and beautiful Vendéan threw herself at his feet, beseeching him to save her from the brutality of the soldiers. With the spirit of a true soldier, Moreau extricated her from their grasp, and had her conveyed to a place of safety. The Jacobins immediately lodged information against him as sheltering the aristocrats; he was thrown into prison, and only saved from the guillotine by the efforts of the Conventionalist Bourbotte, whom he had saved on the field of battle. His life, by his intercession, was spared, but he was deprived of his command, and for some months remained in a private station. Carnot, however, had

paign, by increasing the great distance which already separated the Republican armies. After remaining several days in a state of inactivity, he collected an imposing body of fifty-three thousand men, on the banks of the Lech, and forced the fords of that river on the very day of the battle of Amberg. Latour, who had extended his small army too much, in his anxiety to cover a great extent of country, found his rearguard assailed at Friedberg, and was defeated with the loss of seventeen hundred men, and fourteen pieces of cannon. After this disaster he retreated behind the Iser, in the direction of Landshut; his centre fell back to the neighbourhood of Munich, while the left wing stretched to the foot of the mountains of the Tyrol. Moreau continued for three weeks occupied in inconsiderable movements in Bavaria; during which a severe combat took place at Langenberg, between four thousand Austrian horse and Desaix's division, in which, after the French troops had been at first broken, they ultimately succeeded by heroic efforts in repulsing the enemy. The Archduke was nothing moved by these disasters, but resolutely continued his pursuit of Jourdan. "Let Moreau advance to Vienna," said he, on parting with Latour; "it is of no moment, provided I beat Jourdan." Memorable words! indicating at once the firmness of a great man, and the just eye of a consummate general.¹

This resolute conduct had the desired effect. After the battle of Wurtzburg, the Archduke detached Murferd with

too much discernment to permit his talents to waste long in obscurity; he was again intrusted with a division in the army of the Sambre and Meuse, and bore a distinguished part in the battle of Fleurus. Subsequently, he passed to the army of the Lower Rhine, and was intrusted with the defence and ultimate destruction of the bridges of the Rhine, after the Republican army had crossed over in the close of the campaign of 1795. In despair at seeing the division of Bernadotte, which had not yet passed over, endangered by the premature destruction of the bridge by an engineer under his orders, Marceau drew his sword and was going to kill himself, when his arm was arrested by Kleber, who persuaded him to make an effort to repel the enemy, till the bridge was repaired, which was gallantly and effectually done. Generous, humane, and disinterested, he was yet vehement and sometimes hasty; but his failings were those of a noble character. His military qualities were thus summed up by Kleber:—"I never knew a general so capable as General Marceau of changing with sang-froid a disposition of battle amidst the enemies' bullets." His civil virtues were thus attested by the magistrates of the hostile city of Coblenz—"He did not seduce our daughters; he dishonoured not our husbands, and in the midst of war he alleviated its severities on the people, and protected property and industry in the conquered provinces." A monument designed by Kleber, was raised by the generous care of the Archduke Charles, and still remains an equally honourable memorial of both nations.—See *Biographie Universelle*, xvi. 583, 584; *Biographie des Contemporains*, xii. 391, 392.

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XXI.

1796.

24th Aug.

26th Aug.

¹ Arch. Ch.
iii. 52, 59.
Jom. ix. 50,
56. St Cyr,
iii. 188, 222.

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55.
Archduke,
threatens
his retreat
at Kehl.
18th Sept.

24th Sept.

a small division to join the garrison of Manheim, and combine an attack on the *tête-du-pont* at Kehl, directly in the rear of Moreau, and commanding his principal communication with France. The French were driven into the works, which were assaulted with great bravery by the Imperialists; and though the attack was repulsed, it spread great consternation through the French army, who saw how nearly they had lost their principal communication with their own country. Moreau, who began to be apprehensive that he might be involved in disaster if he advanced further into Germany, proceeded with great circumspection, and arrived on the Iser on the 24th September. Being there informed of the disasters of Jourdan, and that a part of Latour's corps, under Nauendorf, was rapidly advancing upon Ulm to turn his left flank, he halted his army, and next day began a retreat. His situation was now in the highest degree critical. Advanced into the heart of Bavaria, with the defiles of the Black Forest in his rear, at the distance of two hundred miles from the Rhine, with Latour at the head of forty thousand men pressing the one flank, and the Archduke and Nauendorf with twenty-five thousand ready to fall on the other, he might anticipate even greater disasters than Jourdan had sustained before he regained the frontiers of the Republic. But, on the other hand, he was at the head of a superb army of seventy thousand men, whose courage had not been weakened by any disaster, and who possessed the most unlimited confidence, both in their own strength and the resources of their commander. There was no force in Germany capable of arresting so great a mass. It is not with detached columns, or by menacing communications, that the retreat of such a body is to be prevented.¹

1 Th. viii.
412. Jom.
ix. 63, 65.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 186, 208.
St Cyr. iii.
222, 258.

56.
Moreau re-
treats in the
most firm
and methodical man-
ner.

Fully appreciating these great advantages, and aware that nothing is so likely to produce disaster in retreat as any symptoms of apprehension in the general, he resolved to continue his retrograde movement with the utmost regularity, and to dispute every inch of ground with the enemy when they threatened to press upon his forces. The Austrian armies likely to assail him were as follows:—Nauendorf, with nine thousand men, was on the Danube, ready to turn his left flank; Latour, with twenty-four thousand, in Bavaria, directly in his rear; Frœlich, with

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fourteen thousand, on the Upper Elbe and in the Tyrol; while the Archduke, with seventeen thousand, might be expected to abandon the Lahn, and hasten to the scene of decisive operations on the Upper Rhine. It was by maintaining a firm front, and keeping his troops together in masses, that the junction or co-operation of these considerable forces could alone be prevented. Aware that the Archduke might probably block up the line of retreat by the Neckar, Moreau retired by the valley of the Danube and the Black Forest. Resting one of his wings on that stream, he sent forward his parks, his baggage, and his ammunition, before the army, and covering his retreat by a powerful rearguard, succeeded both in repulsing all the attacks of the enemy, and in enabling the body of his army to continue their march without fatigue or interruption.¹

¹ Jom. ix.
63, 68.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 212, 213.
St Cyr. iii.
240, 249.

Want of concert in the Austrian generals at first eminently favoured his movements. Having retired behind the lake of Federsee, he found that Latour was isolated from Nauendorf, who was considerably in advance on the Danube, and the opportunity therefore appeared favourable for striking with superior forces a blow upon his weakened adversary. This was the more necessary, as he was approaching the entrance of the defiles of the Black Forest, which were occupied by the enemy, and it was of the last importance that his movement should not be impeded in traversing those long and difficult passages. Turning, therefore, fiercely upon his pursuers, he assailed Latour near Biberach. The Austrian general, believing that a part only of the enemy's force was in the front, gave battle in a strong position, extending along a series of wooded heights, lined by a formidable artillery. The action was for a long time fiercely contested; but at length the superior forces and abler manœuvres of the Republicans prevailed. Desaix broke their right, while St Cyr turned their left, and a complete victory crowned the efforts of the French, which cost the Imperialists four thousand prisoners, and eighteen pieces of cannon.²

57.
And defeats
Latour at
Biberach.

2d Oct.

² Jom. ix.
65, 71.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 213, 216,
230. Th.
viii. 414.
St Cyr, iii
240, 259, 310.

After this decisive blow, Moreau proceeded leisurely towards the Black Forest, directing his steps towards the Valley of Hell, in hopes of being able to debouche by Friburg, before the Archduke arrived to interrupt his

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58.

Retires
leisurely
through
the Black
Forest.

15th Oct.
1 Arch. Ch.
iii. 240.
Jom. ix. 74.
St Cyr, iii.
311, 333.

59.
Battle of
Emmending-
en between
Moreau and
the Arch-
duke.

16th Oct.

progress. He had already passed the separation of the road by the Neckar, and Nauendorf occupied that which passes by the Valley of Kinzig. He therefore directed his centre towards the entrance of the Valley of Hell, under the command of St Cyr, while he stationed Desaix and Ferino on the right and left, to protect the movements of the principal body. The Austrian detachments in the mountains were too weak to oppose any effectual resistance to the passage of the French army. St Cyr speedily dissipated the clouds of light troops which invested the pine-clad mountains of the Valley of Hell, and Latour, rendered cautious by disaster, without attempting to harass his retreat, moved by Homberg to unite himself to the Archduke. So ably were the measures of the French general concerted, that he not only passed the defiles without either confusion or loss, but debouched into the valley of the Rhine, rather in the attitude of a conqueror than that of a fugitive.¹

Meanwhile the Archduke Charles, being now assured of the direction which Moreau had taken, directed Latour and the detached parties to join him by the valley of Kinzig, while Nauendorf covered their movements by advancing between them and the French columns. The greater part of the Austrian forces were thus collected in the valley of the Rhine in the middle of October, and though still inferior to the enemy, the Archduke resolved to lose no time in attacking, and compelling them to recross that river. Moreau, on his part, was not less desirous of the combat, as he intended to advance to Kehl, and either maintain himself at the *tête-du-pont* there, or cross leisurely over to Strasburg. The action took place at Emmendingen, on the slopes where the mountain melt into the plain; and afforded an example of the truth of the military principle, that in *tactics*, or the operations of actual combat, in that respect widely different from *strategy*, or the general movements of a campaign, the possession of the mountains in general secures that of the valleys which lie at their feet. Waldkirch was felt by both parties to be the decisive point, from the command which it gave over the neighbouring valleys, and accordingly each general strove to reach it before his adversary; but the French, having the advantage of better roads, were the first to arrive. They

were there attacked, however, by Nauendorf, who descended from the heights of the Black Forest, and after a bloody action drove St Cyr, who commanded the Republicans, out of the town with severe loss. Meanwhile the success of the Austrians was not less decisive at other points: the Imperial columns, having at length surmounted the difficulties of the roads, attacked and carried the village of Matterdingen, while their centre drove the Republicans back from Emmendingen, and at length Moreau, defeated at all points, retired into the forest of Nemburg, behind the Elz, with the loss of two thousand men.¹

The Archduke made preparations on the following morning for re-establishing the bridges over the Elz, and renewing the combat; but Moreau retreated in the night, and commenced the passage of the Rhine. Desaix passed that river at Old Brisach, while the general-in-chief took post in the strong position of Schliengen, determined to accept battle, in order to gain time to defile in tranquillity by the bridge of Huningen. The valley of the Rhine is there cut at right angles by a barrier of rocky eminences, which stretch from the mountains of Hohenblau to the margin of the stream. It was on this formidable rampart that Moreau made his last stand, his left resting on the Rhine, his centre on a pile of almost inaccessible rocks, his right on the cliffs of Sizenkirch. The Archduke divided his army into four columns. The Prince of Condé on the right drove in the Republican advanced posts; but made no serious impression; but Latour in the centre, and Nauendorf on the left, gallantly scaled the precipices, drove the Republicans from their positions, and chasing them from height to height, from wood to wood, threw them before nightfall into such confusion, that nothing but the broken nature of the ground, which prevented cavalry from acting, and a violent storm which arose in the evening, saved them from a complete overthrow. Moreau retreated during the night, and on the following day commenced the passage of the Rhine, which was effected without molestation from the Imperialists.²

After having thus effected the deliverance of Germany from both its invaders, the Archduke suggested to the Aulic Council to detach a powerful reinforcement by the Tyrol into Italy, in order to strengthen the army of

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19th Oct.

¹ St Cyr, iv.

10, 26.

Arch. Ch.

iii. 248, 260.

Jom. ix. 78,

80.

60.

His last stand at Hohenblau; but is driven across the Rhine.

20th Oct.

² Jom. ix.

84, 89.

Arch. Ch.

iii. 272, 280.

St Cyr, iv.

27, 40. Per-

sonal obser-

vation.

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61.

Austrians
refuse an
armistice.

Alvinzi, and effect the liberation of Wurmser in Mantua—a measure based on true military principles, and which, if adopted by the Imperial government, would probably have changed the fate of the campaign. Moreau, on his side, proposed an armistice to the Austrians, on condition that the Rhine should separate the two armies, and the Republicans retain the *têtes-du-pont* of Huningen and Kehl; a proposal which the Archduke received with secret satisfaction, as it promised him the means of securely carrying into effect his meditated designs for the deliverance of Italy. But the Austrian government, intent upon the expulsion of the French from Germany, and deeming the forces put at the disposal of Alvinzi adequate for the relief of Mantua, declined both propositions, and sent positive orders for the immediate attack of the fortified posts possessed by the Republicans on the right bank of the Rhine.¹

¹ Arch. Ch.
ii. 290. Jom.
ix. 238.

62.

Long and
bloody siege
of Kehl.

The conduct of the siege of Kehl, during the depth of winter, and with an open communication between the besieged and the great army^o on the opposite bank, presented obstacles of no ordinary kind; but the perseverance and energy of the Austrians ultimately triumphed over all difficulties. Thirty thousand men, under the command of Desaix and St Cyr, were destined for the defence of the works, while a powerful reserve was stationed in the islands of the Rhine; and the troops engaged in the defence were changed every three days, to prevent their being overwhelmed with the fatigues of the service. Forty thousand Austrians, under Latour, formed the besieging force, while the remainder of the army was cantoned in the valley of the Rhine. Though the fort was invested on the 9th October, no material progress was made in the siege, from the extreme difficulty of bringing up the battering train and heavy stores, till the end of November. This long delay gave time to the indefatigable Desaix to complete the works, which, when the Imperialists first sat down before the place, were in a very unfinished state. The trenches were opened on the 21st November; and about the same time a grand sortie was attempted, under the command of Moreau in person, to destroy the works, and gain possession of the Austrian park of artillery. This attack was at first successful: the Republicans carried

21st Nov.

the intrenchments of Sundheim, and had nearly penetrated to the magazines and parks; but the Archduke and Latour having come up with reinforcements to the menaced point, they were at length repulsed with severe loss, though not without carrying with them nine pieces of cannon, which they had captured during the affray. Moreau and Desaix exposed themselves to the hottest of the fire, and were both slightly wounded. After this repulse, the labours of the siege were continued without any other interruption than that arising from the excessive severity of the weather, and the torrents of rain, which, for weeks together, filled the trenches with water. On the night of January 1st, the Imperialists carried by assault the first line of intrenchments round the Republican camp, and a few days afterwards the second line was also stormed after a bloody resistance. Kehl was now no longer defensible; above 100,000 cannon-balls, and 25,000 bombs, projected from forty batteries, had riddled all its defences. The Imperialists, masters of the intrenched camp, enveloped the fort on every side; and the Republicans, after a glorious defence, which does honour to the memory of Desaix and St Cyr, who directed it, evacuated the place by capitulation on the 9th January.¹

During the siege of Kehl, the Imperialists remained in observation before the *tête-du-pont* of Huningen; but no sooner were they at liberty, by the surrender of the former place, than they prosecuted the siege of the latter with extraordinary vigour. Ferino had been left with the right wing of the French to superintend the defence of that important post, but notwithstanding all his exertions he was unable to retard their advances; the trenches were opened in form on the 25th of January, and a sortie having been repulsed on the night of the 31st, the place was evacuated by capitulation on the 1st of February, and the victors found themselves masters only of a heap of ruins.²

This last success terminated the campaign of 1796 in Germany; the most remarkable, in a military point of view, which had occurred, with the exception of that of Napoleon in the same year in Italy, since the commencement of the war. The conquerors in both triumphed over superior forces by the application of the same principles—viz. the skilful use of a central position, and interior line

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¹ Jom. ix.
215, 243.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 298, 310.
St Cyr, iv.
86, 104, 120.

63.
Fall of the
tête-du-pont
at Hunin-
gen.

² Jom. ix.
221. Arch.
Ch. iii. 315,
323. St
Cyr, iv. 127,
138.

64.
Reflections
on this cam-
paign.

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of communication, and the rapid accumulation of superior forces against one of the assailing armies, at a time when it was so situated that it could not receive any assistance from the other. The movements of the Archduke between the armies of Moreau and Jourdan, and the skill with which, by bringing a preponderating force against the decisive point, he compelled their vast armies to undertake a disastrous retreat, are precisely parallel to the blows struck by Napoleon from the interior line of the Adige, on the converging forces of Quasdanovich and Wurmser on the opposite sides of the lake of Garda; and of Alvinzi and Provera, on the plateau of Rivoli and the shores of the Mincio. The difference only lies in the superior energy and activity with which the Republican general flew from one menaced point to another, the accurate calculation of time on which he rested, and the greater difficulties with which he had to struggle from the closer proximity of the attacking forces to each other.

65.
Errors in
the plan of
the Direc-
tory.

The results of this campaign proved the justice of the observation of Napoleon, that the decisive blows were to be struck against Austria in the valley of the Danube; and that Carnot's plan of turning both flanks of the Imperialists at once, along the vast line from the Maine to the Alps, was essentially defective, and offered the fairest opportunity to an enterprising general, aware of the importance of time and rapid movement in war, to fall with a preponderating force first on the one and then on the other. If, instead of dispersing the invading host into two armies, separated from each other by above a hundred miles, and acting without concert, he had united them into one mass, or moved them by converging lines towards Ulm, the catastrophe of 1805 to Austria, at that place, or of Leipsic in 1813 to France, might have been anticipated with decisive effect upon the issue of the war. And after giving all due praise to the just views and intrepid conduct of the Austrian hero, the deliverer of Germany, it must be admitted that he did not carry his enlightened principles into practice with such vigour as might have been done; and that, had Napoleon been in his place on the Murg and at Amberg, he would have struck as decisive blows as at Rivoli and Castiglione.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
314, 339.
Th. viii. 419.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 313, 314.

The unsuccessful irruption of the French into Germany

was attended with one important consequence, from the effectual manner in which it withdrew the veil from the eyes of the lower classes as to the real nature of democratic ambition, and the consequences with which it was attended to the inhabitants of the vanquished states. The Republicans, being destitute of every thing, and in an especial manner denuded of money, when they crossed the Rhine, immediately put in practice their established principle of making war support war, and oppressed the vanquished people by the most enormous contributions. The lesser German states only purchased neutrality by the most enormous sacrifices.* The people contrasted these cruel exactions with the seductive promises of war to the palace and peace to the cottage; and all learned at length, from bitter experience, the melancholy truth, that military violence, under whatever names it may be veiled, is the same in all ages; and that none are such inexorable tyrants to the poor as those who have recently revolted against authority in their own country. Although, therefore, the terror of the Republican arms at first superseded every other consideration, and detached all the states, whose territory had been overrun from the Austrian alliance, yet this was merely the effect of necessity; the hearts of the people remained faithful to the cause of Germany, their exasperation broke out in unmeasured acts of violence against the retreating forces of Jourdan, and they waited only for the first opportunity to resume their ancient attachment to the Imperial standards.¹

The same causes which thus weakened the predilection of the lower orders in Germany for French principles, operated most powerfully in rousing the ancient and hereditary loyalty of the Austrian people to their own sovereigns. When the Republicans approached Bohemia, and had wellnigh penetrated through Bavaria to the Hereditary States, the Emperor issued an animating appeal to his subjects in the threatened provinces, and, with the

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66.

Prodigious contributions levied by the Republicans in Germany.

¹ Ann. Reg. 135, 143. Hard. iii. 393.

67.

Noble and patriotic spirit of the Austrian people.

* The Duke of Wirtemberg was assessed at 4,000,000 francs, or L.160,000 sterling; the circle of Swabia, 12,000,000, or nearly L.500,000, besides 8000 horses, 5000 oxen, 150,000 quintals of corn, and 100,000 pairs of shoes. No less than 8,000,000, or L.320,000, was demanded from the circle of Franconia, besides 6000 horses; and immense contributions from Frankfort, Wurtzburg, Bamberg, Nuremberg, and all the towns through which they passed. These enormous exactions, which amounted in all to 25,000,000 francs, (L.1,000,000), 12,000 horses, 12,000 oxen, 500,000 quintals of wheat, and 200,000 pairs of shoes, excited a universal alarm

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i Ann. Reg.
134, 135.

68.
New con-
vention be-
tween
France and
Prussia.

5th Aug.

spirit of Maria Theresa, called on them to repel the renewed Gallic aggression. Austria, in this trying emergency, relied on the constant success which has so long attended its house through all the vicissitudes of fortune, and, unsubdued by defeat, maintained that unconquerable spirit which has always characterised its race, and so often is found to triumph over the greatest reverses. The people nobly answered the appeal. The peasants flew to arms; new levies were speedily raised; contributions of stores of every kind were voted by the nobility; and from the first invasion of France may be dated the growth of that patriotic spirit which was destined ultimately to rescue Germany from foreign subjugation.¹

This year witnessed the still closer contracting of the unhappy bands which united Prussia to France, and so long perpetuated on the Continent the overwhelming influence of Gallic power. Hardenberg and Haugwitz, who directed the cabinet of Berlin, and who, notwithstanding their differences on many other points, were cordially united in all measures calculated to augment the influence of Prussia in the north of Germany, had laboured assiduously all the summer to form a federal union for the protection of the states in that portion of the empire; and they had succeeded in obtaining a convocation of the circle of Lower Saxony and of Westphalia on the 20th June, to arrange the formation of a formidable army of observation, of which Prussia was the head, to cause their neutrality to be respected by the belligerent powers. The French minister at Berlin, artfully improving upon the terrors produced by Napoleon's successes in Italy, and Jourdan's irruption into Franconia, easily persuaded Haugwitz that the period had now arrived when the interests of Prussia indispensably required the breaking up of the old Germanic Empire, and the cession of the left bank of the Rhine as the boundary of France; and in consequence, two conventions, one public, the other secret, were signed at Berlin on the 5th August. By the first, which alone at that time was published, the line of demarcation, beyond which hostilities were not to pass, was extended, and made to run from Wesel on the Rhine, following the frontiers of the mountains of Thuringia, stretching along the North Sea, including the mouths of the Elbe, the

Weser, and the Ems, and so round by the frontiers of Holland to Wesel again. Beyond this, in addition to the line already agreed to by the treaty of Bâle, the Directory became bound not to push their military operations. By the second, which was kept secret, Prussia recognised the extension of France to the Rhine; and the principle, that the dispossessed German princes were to be indemnified at the expense of the ecclesiastical princes of the empire. The third article provided an indemnity to the Prince of Orange, now evidently and apparently finally expelled from his dominions: and Prussia engaged to endeavour for this purpose to procure the secularisation of the bishoprics of Bamberg and Wurtzburg. "Such was the Secret Convention," says Hardenberg, "which in a manner put the cabinet of Berlin at the mercy of France in the affairs of Germany."¹ It may be added, such was the commencement of that atrocious system of indemnifying the greater states at the expense of the lesser, and satisfying the rapacity of temporal powers by the sacrifice of the Church, which soon after not only stood to its foundation the constitution of the Germanic empire, but totally overturned the whole balance of power and system of public rights in Europe.

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¹ Hard. iii.
374, 394, 398.

While these important transactions were in progress in the heart of Europe, events of another kind, but not less important in their future effect upon the fate of the war, were preparing upon another element.

Three years of continued success had rendered the British flag omnipotent upon the ocean. Britannia literally ruled the waves: the enemies' colonies successively fell beneath her strokes; and the fleets of France, blockaded in her harbours, were equally unable to protect the commerce of the Republic, or acquire the experience requisite for maritime success. The minister of the marine, Truguet, in proposing a new system for the regulation of the navy, gave a gloomy, but faithful picture of its present condition. "The deplorable state of our marine," said he, "is well known to our enemies, who insult us in our very harbours. Our fleets are humiliated, defeated, blockaded in their ports; destitute of provisions and naval equipments: torn by internal faction, weakened by ignorance, ruined

69
Naval operations of the year. Deplorable state of the French Marine.

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by desertion : such is the state in which the men to whom you have intrusted its direction, have found the French marine." The ruin of the French navy was not the consequence merely of the superior skill and experience of the English sailors ; it arose necessarily from the confusion of finances, loss of colonies, and failure of resources, which were the result of the revolutionary convulsion. Fleets cannot be equipped without naval stores, nor navigated but by a body of experienced seamen ; it is impossible, therefore, to become a powerful maritime state without a regular revenue and an extensive commerce, both of which had disappeared during the distractions of the Revolution. Severe internal distress, by filling the ranks of the army, may form a formidable military power, and destitute battalions may issue from a convulsed state to plunder and oppress the adjoining nations ; but a similar system will never equip a fleet, nor enable a revolutionary to contend with a regular government on the ocean. From the very elements by which the contest was carried on, it was already evident, that, though France might defeat the land forces of Europe, England would acquire the dominion of the waves.¹

¹ Jom. ix.
225.

70.
Successes of
the English
in the West
and East
Indies.
August.

The hostilities carried on by the naval and military forces of Great Britain in the West and East Indies, were attended with the most decisive success. The island of Granada, which had long been in a state of revolt, yielded to the perseverance and ability of General Nicols : St Lucie was reduced in May by General Abercromby, and Esse- quibo and Demerara by General White ; while the French could only set off against these losses the destruction of the merchandise and shipping at Newfoundland by Admiral Richery. In the Indian seas, the successes of the British were still more important. A Dutch squadron of three ships of the line, three frigates, and many vessels of inferior size, having on board two thousand land troops, destined to retake the Cape of Good Hope, was captured by Admiral Elphinstone in the bay of Saldanha ; while the Batavian settlements of Ceylon, the Malaccas, and Cochin, with the important harbour of Trincomalee, were, early in the year, taken possession of by the British forces. Thus was the foundation laid, in both hemispheres of the colonial empire of Great Britain,² which has subsequently

² Ann. Reg.
194. Jom.
ix. 240.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
240, 252.

grown up to such an extraordinary magnitude, and promises in its ultimate results, to exert a greater and more wide-spread influence on mankind than any which has been effected by human agency, since the Roman legions ceased to conquer and civilise the world.

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These important successes, particularly the reduction of the Cape, Ceylon, and the Malaccas, diffused general joy through the British nation. It was justly observed, that the former was a halfway-house to India, and indispensable to the mighty empire which we had acquired in the plains of Hindostan; while the latter secured the emporium of the China trade, and opened up the vast commerce of the Indian Archipelago. The attention of the people, by these great acquisitions, began to be turned towards the probable result and final issue of the war: they looked to the conquests of the British at sea, as likely to counterbalance the acquisitions of the Republicans at land: they observed that Rhodes long maintained a doubtful contest with Rome after its land forces had subdued Spain, Carthage, and part of Gaul; and that in a similar contest Great Britain would have incomparably greater chances of success than the Grecian commonwealth, from the superior internal strength which the population of its own islands afforded, and the far more extensive commerce which enriched it from every quarter of the globe. "Athens," said Xenophon, "would have prevailed over Lacedæmon, if Attica had been an island inaccessible save by water to the land forces of its opponent;" and it was impossible not to see that nature had given that advantage to the European, which she had denied to the Grecian maritime power. The formation of a great colonial empire, embracing all the quarters of the globe, held together and united by the naval power of England, and enriching the parent state by its commerce, and the market it would open for its manufactures, began to engage the thoughts not only of statesmen, but of practical men, and the Cape and Ceylon were spoken of as acquisitions which should never be abandoned.¹

71.
General joy
which these
successes
diffused in
England.

¹ Ann. Reg.
195. Jom.
ix. 241.

St Domingo still continued in the distracted and unfortunate state into which it had been thrown by the visionary dreams of the French Republicans, and the frightful

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72.
Continued
deplorable
state of St
Domingo.

flames of a servile war which had been lighted up by their extravagant philanthropists. All the efforts, both of the French and English, to restore any thing like order to its furious and savage population, proved unsuccessful.¹ The latter had never been in sufficient force to make any serious impression on its numerous and frantic inhabitants; and the former were hardly able to retain a scanty footing in the northern part of the island, without attempting to regain the splendid and prosperous colony which they had lost. The blacks, taught by experience, perfectly acquainted with the country, and comparatively unaffected by its deadly climate, maintained a successful contest with European forces, who melted away more rapidly under its fatal evening gales, than either by the ravages of famine or the sword of the enemy. Toussaint had already risen to eminence in the command of these desultory forces, and was taken into the French service with the division he had organised, in the vain attempt to re-establish the sinking authority of the Republican commissioners.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
192, 193.
Journ. 230,
240.

73.
Treaty of
alliance
between
France and
Spain at St
Ildefonso.

Notwithstanding the disastrous state of the principal colony of France, and the great losses which she had sustained in her maritime possessions, Great Britain showed herself disposed during this year to make great sacrifices to her, to obtain a general peace. In truth, notwithstanding her naval successes, the situation of England, from the disasters of her allies, had become sufficiently alarming. Spain, detached by the treaty of Bâle from all connexion with the Allies, had lately fallen under the Republican influence, and yielded to that jealousy of the British naval power, which is so easily excited among the European states. The Directory, artfully improving these advantages, had fanned the Spanish discontents into a flame, by holding out hopes of some acquisitions in Italy, won by the sword of Napoleon, in case they joined the Republican alliance. Influenced by these considerations, the Spaniards fell into the snare, from which they were destined hereafter to experience such disastrous effects, and on the 19th August, concluded a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with France, on the footing of the family compact. By this treaty, the powers mutually guaranteed to each other their dominions both in the Old and the New World, and engaged to assist each other, in

19th Aug.

case of attack, with twenty-four thousand land troops, thirty ships of the line, and six frigates. This was followed, in the beginning of October, by a formal declaration of war,* on the part of Spain, against Great Britain. Thus England, which had commenced the war with so many confederates, saw herself not only deprived of all her maritime allies, but the whole coasts of Europe, from the Texel to Gibraltar, arrayed in fierce hostility against her.^{1*}

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2d Oct.
1 Th. viii.
251, 252.
Ann. Reg.
2 Martens,
vi. 255.

Impressed with these dangers, and desirous also of disarming the numerous and powerful party in Great Britain, who contended against the war as both unnecessary and impolitic, Mr Pitt, in the close of this year, made

* Many grounds of complaint were assigned in the Spanish manifesto on this occasion; but they met with a decisive refutation from the British cabinet, in an able state paper, drawn up by Mr Canning. It was urged by the Spanish court, that the conduct of the English during the war, but especially at the siege of Toulon, and in the expedition to Quiberon, had determined the cabinet of Madrid to make peace with France as soon as it could be done with safety to the monarchy; that the bad faith of the English government further appeared in the treaty of 19th November 1794, concluded, without regard to the rights of Spain, with the United States, in the injustice with which they seized the St Jago, at first taken by the French, but afterwards retaken by the English, which, by the subsisting convention, ought to have been restored, and in the intercepting of ammunition for the Spanish squadrons; that the crews of her ships had frequently landed on the coast of Chili, and carried on a contraband trade, as well as reconnoitred these valuable possessions, and had evinced a clear intention of seizing part of the Spanish colonial territories, by sending a considerable force to the Antilles and St Domingo, and by her recent acquisition of the Dutch settlement of Demerara; that frequent insults and acts of violence had been committed by the English cruisers upon Spanish vessels in the Mediterranean; that the Spanish territory had been violated by descents of English ships on the coast of Galicia and at Trinidad: and, finally, that the majesty of Spain had been insulted by the decrees of a court in London, authorising the arrest of its ambassador for a small sum. "By all those insults," it concluded, "equally deep and unparalleled, that nation has proved to the universe, that she recognises no other laws than the aggrandisement of her commerce, and by her despotism, which has exhausted our patience and moderation, has rendered a declaration of war unavoidable."²

5th Oct.

2 Ann. Reg.
xxviii. 106.
State Papers.

To this manifesto, the acrimonious style of which too clearly betrayed the quarter from which it had proceeded, it was replied by the British government, that "the unprovoked declaration of war on the part of Spain had at length compelled the king of England to take measures to assert the dignity of his crown; that a simple reference to the Spanish declaration, and a bare enumeration of the frivolous charges which it contains, must be sufficient to satisfy every reasonable and impartial person that no part of the conduct of Great Britain towards Spain has afforded the smallest ground of complaint. The acts of hostility attributed to England, consist either of matters perfectly innocent, or of imputed opinions and intentions, of which no proof is adduced, nor effect alleged, or of complaints of the misconduct of unauthorised individuals, concerning which his Majesty has always professed his willingness to institute enquiry, and grant redress, where it was really due. The charge of misconduct on the part of the British admiral at Toulon is unprecedented and absurd; and this is perhaps the first instance that it has been imputed as a crime to one of the commanding officers of two powers, acting in alliance, and making a common cause in war, that he did more than his proportion of mischief to the

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74.
Overture
for a general
peace made
by Great
Britain,
which
proves un-
successful.

overtures for a general peace to the French government. Lord Malmesbury was dispatched to Paris to open the negotiations; but it is probable that no great hopes of their success were entertained, as nearly at the same time an alliance was concluded with Russia, for the aid of sixty thousand auxiliary troops to the Austrian forces. The British envoy arrived at Paris on the 22d October, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants, and proposals of peace were immediately made by the English government. These were, the recognition of the Republic by the British government, and the restitution of all the colonies to

common enemy. The treaty with America did nothing more than what every independent power has a right to do, or than his Spanish Majesty has since that time himself done; and inflicted no injury whatever on the subjects of that monarchy. The claims of all parties in regard to the condemnation of the *St Jago*, captured by his Majesty's forces, were fully heard before the only competent tribunal, and one whose impartiality is above all suspicion. The alleged misconduct of some merchant ships in landing their crews on the coast of Chili and Peru, forms no legitimate ground of complaint against the British government; and even if some irregularities had been committed, they might have been punished on the spot, or the courts of London were always ready to receive and redress complaints of that description.

"In regard to the expedition to *St Domingo* and *Demerara*, with all the regard which he feels to the rights of neutral powers, it is a new and unheard-of extension of neutral rights which is to be restricted by no limits, and is to attach not to the territories of a neutral power itself, but to whatever may once have belonged to it, and to whatever may be situated in its neighbourhood, though in the actual possession of an enemy. The complaint in regard to *St Domingo* is peculiarly unfortunate, as the cession of part of that island by the recent treaty from Spain to France, is a breach of that solemn treaty under which alone the crown of Spain holds any part of its American possessions. Such an act would at once have justified any measures of retaliation on the part of the British government; but so earnest was their desire to maintain peace, that they repeatedly endeavoured to ascertain when the Spanish right to the ceded territory was to terminate, in order that their efforts might be directed against the French alone. Some irregularities in the course of so long and vast a contest may have been committed by the British cruisers in the exercise of the undoubted right of search enjoyed by every belligerent state; but to the readiness of the British government to grant redress in every case where an injury has been committed, even Spain herself can bear testimony. The complaint regarding the alleged decree against the Spanish ambassador, is, if possible, still more frivolous, that being nothing more than a simple citation to answer for a debt demanded, the mistaken act of an individual who was immediately disavowed and prosecuted by the government, and made repeated but vain submissive applications to the Spanish ambassador for forgiveness, such as in all former cases had been deemed satisfactory.

"It will be plain to posterity, it is now notorious to Europe, that neither to the genuine wishes, nor even the mistaken policy of Spain, is her present conduct to be attributed; that not from enmity towards Great Britain, not from any resentment of past, or apprehension of future injuries, but from a blind subservience to the views of his Majesty's enemies; from the dominion usurped over her councils and actions by her new allies. She has been compelled to act in a quarrel, and for interests not her own; to take up arms against one of those powers in whose cause she had professed to feel the strongest interest, and to menace with hostility another, against whom no cause of complaint is pretended, but an honourable adherence to its engagements."—*Ann. Reg.* 1796, 147; *State Papers*.

France and Holland, which had been conquered since the commencement of the war. In return for these concessions, they insisted that the French should restore the Low Countries to the Emperor, Holland to the Stadtholder, and evacuate all their conquests in Italy, but they were to retain Luxemburg, Naumur, Nice, and Savoy. It was hardly to be expected that the Republican government, engaged in so dazzling a career of victory as they had recently followed in Italy, and entirely dependent on popular favour, would consent to these terms, or that they could have maintained their place at the head of affairs, if they had submitted to them. Accordingly, after the negotiations had been continued for two months, they were abruptly broken off, by the Directory ordering Lord Malmesbury to quit Paris in twenty-four hours, and he immediately returned to his own country. But it must ever be a matter of pride to the British historian, that the power which had been uniformly victorious on its own element, should have offered to treat on terms of equality with that from which it had so little to dread, and that England, to procure favourable terms for her allies, was willing to have abandoned all her own acquisitions.¹

While these negotiations were yet pending, a measure was undertaken by the French government, which placed England in the utmost peril, and from which she was saved rather by the winds of heaven than by any exertions of her own. It was the extravagant expectations they had formed of success from this operation, which led to the long delay and final rupture of the negotiation.²

Ireland, long the victim of oppressive government and now of popular passion, was at this period in a state of unusual excitement. The successful issue of the French Revolution had stimulated the numerous needy and ardent characters in that distracted nation to project a similar revolt against the authority of England; and above two hundred thousand men, in all parts of the country, were engaged in a vast conspiracy for overturning the established government, and erecting a democracy, after the model of France, in its stead. Overlooking the grinding misery which the convulsions of the Republic had occasioned to its inhabitants; without considering how an insular power, detached from the Continent, was to maintain itself against

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1796.

27th Dec.
1 Jom. ix.
149, 246.
Ann. Reg.
191, and
State Papers,
176, 177.
Hard. iv.
106, 110.
Malmesb. ii.
163, 209.

² Hard. iv.
107.

75.
Alarming
state of Ire-
land.

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the naval forces of England, the patriots of Ireland rushed blindly into the project, with that ardent but inconsiderate zeal and inveterate rancour against the British government for which the people of that country have always been distinguished. The malcontents were enrolled under generals, colonels, and officers, in all the counties: arms were secretly provided, and nothing was wanting but the arrival of the French troops to proclaim the insurrection in every part of the country. Their design was to break off the connexion with England, confiscate every shilling of British property in Ireland, and form a Hibernian Republic in close alliance with the great parent democracy at Paris. With such secrecy were the preparations made, that the British government had but an imperfect account of its danger; while the French Directory, accurately informed by its emissaries of what was going forward, was fully prepared to turn it to the best account.¹*

¹ Hard. ii.
187, 189.
Th. viii.
352, 486.
Moore's
Fitz-Gerald,
i. 275, 300.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
264, 268.

* The intentions of the Irish revolutionists, and the length to which they had in secret carried their preparations for the formation of a Hibernian Republic, will be best understood from the following passages, in a memorial presented by Wolfe Tone, one of their principal leaders, to the French Directory.

"The Catholics of Ireland are 3,150,000, all trained from their infancy in a hereditary hatred and abhorrence of the English name. For these five years they have fixed their eyes most earnestly on France, whom they look upon, with great justice, as fighting their battles, as well as those of all mankind who are oppressed. Of this class, I will stake my head there are 500,000 men, who would fly to the standard of the Republic, if they saw it once displayed in the cause of liberty and their country.

"The Republic may also rely with confidence on the support of the Dissenters, actuated by reason and reflection, as well as the Catholics, impelled by misery, and inflamed by detestation of the English name. In the year 1791, the Dissenters of Belfast first formed the club of United Irishmen, so called, because in that club, for the first time, Dissenters and Catholics were seen together in harmony and union. Corresponding clubs were rapidly formed, the object of which was to subvert the tyranny of England, establish the independence of Ireland, and frame a free Republic on the broad basis of liberty and equality. These clubs were rapidly filled, and extended in June last over two-thirds of that province. Their members are all bound by an oath of secrecy, and could, I have not the smallest doubt, on a proper occasion, raise the entire force of the province of Ulster, the most populous, warlike, and best informed in the nation.

"The Catholics also have an organisation commencing about the same time with the clubs last mentioned, but composed of Catholics only. Until within these few months this organisation baffled the utmost vigilance of the Irish government, unsuccessfully applied to discover its principles; and to this hour they are, I believe, unapprised of its extent. The fact is, that, in June last, it embraced the whole peasantry of the provinces of Ulster, Leinster, and Connaught, three-fourths of the nation, and I have little doubt that it has since extended into Munster, the remaining province. These men, who are called Defenders, are completely organised on a military plan, divided according to their respective districts, and officered by men chosen by themselves; the principle of their union is implicit obedi-

Hoche, at the head of a hundred thousand men, on the shores of the ocean, in La Vendée and Brittany, burned with the desire to eclipse the great exploits of Napoleon and Moreau against the Imperial forces. Ireland offered a theatre worthy of his army and his reputation, and by striking a decisive blow against the English power in that quarter, he had an opportunity of crippling the ancient rival of France, and achieving greater benefits for his country than either the victory of Fleurus or the triumphs of Rivoli. Truguet, the minister of marine, seconded him warmly with all his influence, and by their joint exertions an expedition was shortly prepared at Brest, more formidable than could have been anticipated from the dilapidated state of the French navy. It consisted of fifteen ships of the line, on board each of which were embarked six hundred soldiers, twelve frigates and six corvettes, each carrying two hundred and fifty men, and a number of transports and other vessels, conveying in all twenty-five thousand land forces. This armament was to be joined by seven ships of the line, under Richery, from the harbour of Rochefort. The troops were the best in Hoche's army: the general-in-chief was sanguine of success; and such were the hopes entertained of the result of the expedition, that the Directory transmitted orders for it to sail several weeks before Lord Malmesbury left Paris,¹ and their expect-

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1796.

76.
Designs of
the Direc-
tory and
Hoche
against that
country.

¹ Ann. Reg.
198. Th.
viii. 353, 486,
487. Jom.
ix. 250.
Hard. iv.
107. Vict.
et Conq. vii.
273, 275.

ence to the orders of those whom they have elected as their generals, and whose object is the emancipation of their country, the subversion of English usurpation, and the bettering the condition of the wretched peasantry of Ireland. The eyes of this whole body, which may be said almost without a figure to be the people of Ireland, are turned with the most anxious expectation to France for assistance and support. The oath of their union recites, 'that they will be faithful to the united nations of France and Ireland,' and several of them have already sealed it with their blood. I suppose there is no conspiracy, if a whole people can be said to conspire, which has continued for so many years as this has done, where the secret has been so religiously kept, and where in so vast a number so few traitors are to be found.

"There is also a further organisation of the Catholics, which is called the General Committee, a representative body chosen by the Catholics at large, which decides the movements of the City of Dublin, and possesses a very great influence on the minds of the Catholics throughout the nation. I can add, from my personal knowledge, that a great majority of the able and honest men who compose it are sincere Republicans, warmly attached to the cause of France, and as Irishmen, and as Catholics, doubly bound to detest the tyranny and domination of England, which has often deluged the country with their best blood.

"The militia are, about eighteen thousand strong, as fine men as any in Europe. Of these sixteen thousand are Catholics, and of those a very great proportion are sworn Defenders. I have not a shadow of doubt that the militia would, in cases of emergency, to a man, join their country-

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1796.

77.
Measures to deceive the British Government, and its defensive preparations.

1 Jom. ix.
253. Th.
viii. 485.
Ann. Reg.
198, 199.

78.
The expedition sets sail, and is dispersed by the tempests.
15th Dec.

tations of its consequences were the principal motive for breaking off the negotiation.

To distract the attention of the enemy, the most inconsistent accounts were spread of the object of the expedition ; sometimes, that it was destined for the West Indies ; at others, for the shores of Portugal ; but, notwithstanding these artifices, the British government readily discerned where the blow was really intended to be struck. Orders were transmitted to Ireland to have the militia in readiness ; a vigilant watch was kept up on the coasts : and directions were given that, in the event of a descent being effected, all the cattle and provisions should be driven into the interior ; precautions which in the end proved unnecessary, but which were dictated by a prudent foresight, and gave the French government an idea of the species of resistance which they might expect in the event of such an invasion being really effected.¹

The expedition set sail in the middle of December, two days before the negotiation was broken off at Paris : but it encountered disasters from the very moment of its leaving the harbour. A violent tempest arose immediately after its departure ; and though the mist with which it was accompanied enabled the French admiral to elude the vigilance of the British squadron, yet one ship of the line struck on the rocks near the isle of Ushant and perished ;

men in throwing off the yoke of England."—*First Memorial delivered to the French Directory, Feb. 1796, by Wolfe Tone.*—WOLFE TONE, ii. 187—188—191.

"It would be just as easy, in a month's time, to have an army in Ireland of two hundred thousand as ten thousand. The peasantry would flock to the Republican standard in such numbers as to embarrass the general-in-chief. A proclamation should instantly be issued, containing an invitation to the people to join the Republican standard, organise themselves, and form a *National Convention for the purpose of framing a Government*, and administering the affairs of Ireland till it was put in activity.

"The first act of the Convention thus constituted should be, to declare themselves the Representatives of the Irish people, free and independent, and in that capacity to form an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the French Republic, stipulating that neither party should make peace with England till the two Republics were acknowledged.

"The Convention should next publish a proclamation, notifying their independence and their alliance with the French Republic, forbidding all adherence to the British government, under the penalty of high treason, ordering all taxes and contributions to be paid only to such persons as should be appointed by the provisional government. Another to the militia, recalling them to the standard of their country ; and another to the Irishmen in the navy, recalling them directly from that service ; and this should be followed by another, confiscating every shilling of English property in Ireland of every species, moveable or fixed, and appropriating it to the national service."—WOLFE TONE, *Second Memorial addressed to the French Directory. Wolfe Tone's Memoirs*, ii. 197, 201.

several were damaged, and the fleet was totally dispersed. This tempestuous weather continued the whole time the fleet was at sea. Hoche himself, who was on board a frigate, was separated from the remainder of his squadron; and after a stormy passage, a part of the expedition reached the point of rendezvous, in Bantry Bay, eight days after its departure from the French harbour. Admiral Bouvet, the second in command, resolved to land the troops, although only eight ships of the line, and some of the transports, were assembled, having on board six thousand land forces. But the violence of the tempest, and the prodigious swell of the sea on that iron-bound coast, rendered that impossible, and the crew of a boat which was sent through the surf to reconnoitre, were speedily made prisoners by the numerous bodies of armed men who appeared on the beach to oppose a landing. Dispirited by such a succession of disasters, unwilling to undertake the responsibility of hazarding a part only of the land forces in the absence of the general-in-chief, and apprehensive that provisions for the crews of the vessels would fail, from the long time that they had been at sea, Bouvet resolved to make the best of his way back to the French harbours. He set sail accordingly, and had the good fortune to reach Brest on the last day of December, whither he was soon followed by the scattered divisions of his fleet, after two ships of the line and three frigates had been lost; one of the former by the violence of the elements, and the other by the attacks of the English. Hoche, himself, after escaping a thousand perils, was landed on the island of Rhé; and the Directory, abandoning the expedition for the present, moved the greater part of his forces to the Rhine, to replace the losses of Jourdan's army, to the command of which they destined that able general.¹

Such was the issue of this expedition, which had so long kept Great Britain in suspense, and revealed to its enemies the vulnerable quarter in which it might be attacked with the greatest chance of success. Its result was pregnant with important instruction to the rulers of both countries. To the French, as demonstrating the extraordinary risks which attend a maritime expedition in comparison with a land campaign; the small number of forces which

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24th Dec.

31st Dec.

¹ Ann. Reg.
198. Th.
viii. 489-490.
Jom. ix. 252.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
274, 291.

79.

Reflections
on the fail-
ure of this
expedition.

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can be embarked on board even a great fleet, and the unforeseen disasters which frequently on that element defeat the best concerted enterprises. To the English, as showing that the empire of the seas does not always afford security against invasion; that in the face of superior maritime forces, her possessions had been for sixteen days at the mercy of the enemy, and that neither the skill of her sailors, nor the valour of her armies, but the fury of the elements, had saved them from danger in the most vulnerable part of their dominions. While these considerations are fitted to abate the confidence of the invader, they are calculated at the same time to weaken an overweening reliance on naval superiority; and to demonstrate, that the only defence on which certain trust can be placed, even by an insular power, is a well-disciplined army, and the patriotism of its own subjects.

80.
Probable
consequences if
the expedition
had
effected a
landing.

It is a curious subject for speculation, what might have been the result had Hoche succeeded in landing with twenty-five thousand of his best troops on the Irish shores. To those who consider, indeed, the patriotic spirit, indomitable valour, and persevering character of the English people, and the complete command they had of the sea, the final issue of such a contest cannot appear doubtful; but it is equally evident that the addition of such a force, and so able a commander, to the prodigious and organised body of Irish malcontents, would have engendered a dreadful domestic war, and that the whole energies of the empire might for a very long period have been employed in saving itself from dismemberment. When it is recollected, also, how widely the spirit of discontent was diffused even through the population of Great Britain at that period, in what a formidable manner it soon after broke out in the mutiny at the Nore, and what serious financial embarrassments were already pressing upon the treasury, and preparing the dreadful catastrophe which led to the suspension of cash payments in the following spring, it must be admitted that the nation then stood upon the edge of an abyss; and that, if ever Providence interferes in human affairs otherwise than by the energy which it infuses into the cause of justice, and the moral laws to which the deeds of free agents are rendered sub-

servient, its protection never appeared in so remarkable a manner to the British islands since the winds and the waves dispersed the Spanish Armada.

The close of this year was marked by the death of the Empress Catharine, and the accession of the Emperor Paul to the Russian throne: an event of no small importance to the future fate of the war and destiny of the world. Shortly before her death, she had by art and flattery contrived to add Courland to her immense dominions. She had recently made herself mistress of Derbent in Persia; and the alliance with Great Britain and Austria secured to her the concurrence of these powers in her favourite project of dismembering the Turkish dominions, and placing her youngest son on the throne of Constantine. She thus seemed to be fast approaching the grand object of her desire, and might have lived to see the cross planted on the dome of St Sophia, when death interrupted all her schemes of ambition, in the sixty-seventh year of her age, and the thirty-sixth of her reign. Her latest project was the formation of a powerful confederacy for the defence of Europe against the French Republic; and she had given orders for the levy of a hundred and fifty thousand men, intended to take a part in the German campaigns, a design which, if carried into effect by her firm and intrepid hand, might have accelerated by nearly twenty years the catastrophe which closed the war.¹

Few sovereigns will occupy a more conspicuous place in the page of history, or have left in their conduct on the throne a more exalted reputation. Prudent in council, and intrepid in conduct; cautious in forming resolutions, but vigorous in carrying them into execution: ambitious, but of great and splendid objects only; passionately fond of glory, without the alloy, at least in public affairs, of sordid or vulgar inclinations; discerning in the choice of her counsellors, and swayed in matters of state generally by lofty intellects; munificent in public, liberal in private, firm in resolution, unwearied in purpose, she dignified a despotic throne by the magnanimity and patriotism of a more virtuous age. But these great qualities were counterbalanced by as remarkable vices—and more truly perhaps of her than of the Virgin Queen of England it might be said, in Burleigh's words, "that if to-day she was more

CHAP.
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1796.

81.
Death of the
Empress
Catharine.
10th Nov.

¹ Ann. Reg.
200, 202.

82.
Her character.

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than man, to-morrow she would be less than woman." Vehement, sensual, and capricious in private life, she seemed, as a woman, to live only for the gratification of her passions; her successive lovers, under the name of favourites, formed as regular a part of her establishment as her ministers of state, and received a much larger share of her revenues; tyrannical, overbearing, and sometimes cruel in her administration, she filled her subjects with unbounded awe for her authority. Like Henry VIII. of England, she spared neither man in her lust, nor woman in her hate. She was not always able to withstand the influence of her favourites in affairs of state; they were frequently selected from the officers of her guard, from no other quality but personal beauty, and many of the worst acts of her government may be traced to their ascendancy. In the lustre of her administration, however, the career of her victories, and the rapid progress of her subjects under so able a government, mankind forgot her dissolute manners, the occasional elevation of unworthy minions, frequent acts of tyranny, and the bloody deeds which signalled her accession to the throne; they overlooked the frailties of the woman in the dignity of the princess; and paid to the abilities and splendour of the Semiramis of the North that involuntary homage which commanding qualities on the throne never fail to secure, even when stained by irregularities in private life.*

The end of the same year witnessed the resignation of the presidency of the United States of America by General Washington, and his voluntary retirement into private life. Modern history has not so spotless a character to

* The elegant flattery of France applied to the Empress the noble lines of Voltaire in *Semiramis*, perhaps written with that very view.

“ Que de Semiramis les beaux jours pleins de gloire
Effacent ce moment heureux ou malheureux
Qui d'un fatal hymen brisa le joug affreux,
Ninus, en vous perdant, madame, eut perdu Babylone,
Pour le bien des mortels vous previntes ses coups,
Babylone et la terre avaient besoin de vous :
Et quinze ans de vertu et de travaux utiles,
Les arides deserts par vos soins rendus fertiles,
Les sauvages humains soumis à vos lois,
Les arts dans nos cités naissant à votre voix,
Ces hardis monumens que l'univers admire,
Les acclamations de cet puissant empire,
Sont autant de temoins dont le cri glorieux
A déposé pour vous au tribunal des dieux.”

Semiramis, Act i. Scene 5.

commemorate. Invincible in resolution, firm in conduct, incorruptible in integrity, he brought to the helm of a victorious republic the simplicity and innocence of rural life; he was forced into greatness by circumstances, rather than led into it by inclination, and prevailed over his enemies rather by the wisdom of his designs, and the perseverance of his character, than by any extraordinary genius for the art of war. A soldier from necessity and patriotism, rather than disposition, he was the first to recommend a return to pacific counsels when the independence of his country was secured; and bequeathed to his countrymen an address on leaving their government, to which there are few compositions of uninspired wisdom which can bear a comparison.* He was modest without diffidence; sensible to the voice of fame without vanity; independent and dignified without either asperity or pride.¹ He was a friend

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1796.

83.

Retirement
of Washing-
ton from
public life.
His perfect
character,
and admirable
valedictory
address to
his countrymen.
17th Sept.

1 See Ann.
Reg. 1796.
State Papers,
293.

* This great man observes, in that admirable composition: "Towards the preservation of your government, and the permanence of your present happy state, it is requisite not only that you discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretexts. One method of assault may be to effect in the forms of the constitution alterations which will impair the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown. In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of government, as of other human institutions; that experiment is the surest standard by which to test the real tendency of the existing constitution of a country; that facility in changes, upon the mere credit of hypothesis and opinion, exposes to perpetual change, from the endless variety of hypothesis and opinion; and remember especially, that, for the efficient management of your common interests, in a country so extensive as ours, a government of as much vigour as is consistent with the perfect security of liberty is indispensable. Liberty itself will find in such a government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest guardian. It is indeed little else than a name, where the government is too feeble to withstand the enterprises of faction, to confine each member of the society within the limits prescribed by the laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property.

"Let me now warn you, in the most solemn manner, against the baneful effects of the spirit of party generally. It is unfortunately inseparable from our nature, having its roots in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or oppressed, but in those of the popular form it is seen in its greatest rankness, and it is truly their worst enemy. The alternate dominion of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge natural to party discussion, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a most horrid despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of a single individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able, or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this despotism to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of public liberty." What words, to be spoken by the founder of the American Republic, the refuser of the American crown, at a time when the career of Napoleon had just commenced in Europe!—See *Ann. Reg.* xxxviii. 298; *State Papers*.

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to liberty, but not to licentiousness; not to the dreams of enthusiasts, but to those practical ideas which America had inherited from her English descent, and which were opposed to nothing so much as the extravagant love of power in the French democracy. Accordingly, after having signalised his life by successful resistance to English oppression, he closed it by the warmest advice to cultivate the friendship of Great Britain; and exerted his whole influence, shortly before his resignation, to effect the conclusion of a treaty of friendly and commercial intercourse between the mother country and its emancipated offspring. He was a Cromwell without his ambition; a Sylla without his crimes: and, after having raised his country, by his exertions, to the rank of an independent state, closed his career by a voluntary relinquishment of the power which a grateful people had bestowed. If it is the highest glory of England to have given birth, even amidst Transatlantic wilds, to such a man; and if she cannot number him among those who have extended her provinces or augmented her dominions, she may at least feel a legitimate pride in the victories which he achieved, and the great qualities which he exhibited, in the contest with herself; and indulge with satisfaction in the reflection, that that vast empire, which neither the ambition of Louis XIV. nor the power of Napoleon could dismember, received its first shock from the courage which she had communicated to her own offspring; and that, amidst the convulsions and revolutions of other states, real liberty has arisen in that nation alone, which inherited in its veins the genuine principles of British freedom.

CHAPTER XXII.

INTERNAL TRANSACTIONS AND NAVAL CAMPAIGN OF
GREAT BRITAIN IN 1797.

ALTHOUGH the war had now continued four years, and it was obvious to all the world that England and France were the principals in the contest, yet these two states had not as yet come into immediate and violent collision. Inferior powers required to be struck down, weaker states to be removed from the field, before the leaders of the fight dealt their blows at each other; like the champions of chivalry, who were separated in the commencement of the affray by subordinate knights, and did not engage in mortal conflict till the field was covered with the dead and the dying. The period, however, was now approaching, when this could no longer continue, for the successes of France had been such as to compel Britain to fight, not merely for victory, but for existence. All the allies with whom, and for whose protection, she had engaged in the contest, were either struggling in the extremity of disaster, or openly arrayed under the banners of her enemies. Austria, after a desperate and heroic resistance in Italy, was preparing for the defence of her last barriers in the passes of the Alps. Holland was virtually incorporated with the conquering Republic. Spain had recently joined its forces; the whole Continent, from the Texel to Gibraltar, was arrayed against Great Britain; and all men were sensible that, in spite of her maritime superiority, she had in the preceding winter narrowly escaped invasion in the most vulnerable quarter, and owed to the winds and the waves her exemption from the horrors of civil war.

The aspect of public affairs in Britain had never been

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1797.

1.

Evident
approach of
a crisis in
the war.

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1797.

2.

Gloomy
aspect of
public
affairs in
England in
the begin-
ning of 1797.

so clouded since the commencement of the war, nor indeed during the whole of the 18th century, as they were at the opening of the year 1797. The return of Lord Malmesbury from Paris had closed every hope of terminating a contest, in which the national burdens were daily increasing, while the prospect of success was continually diminishing. Party spirit raged with uncommon violence in every part of the empire. Insurrections prevailed in many districts of Ireland, discontents and suffering in all; commercial embarrassments were rapidly increasing, and the continued pressure of the bank threatened a total dissolution of public credit. The consequence of this accumulation of disasters was a rapid fall of the public securities; the three per cents were sold as low as 51, having fallen to that from 98, at which they stood shortly before the commencement of the contest in 1792; petitions for a change of ministers and an alteration of government were presented from almost every city of note in the empire, and that general distrust and depression prevailed which is at once the cause and the effect of public misfortune.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
148, 149,
1797.

3.

Crisis of the
Bank, and
Order in
Council sus-
pending
cash pay-
ments.

The first of these disasters was one which, in a despotic state unacquainted with the unlimited confidence in government that, in a free state, results from long-continued fidelity in the discharge of its engagements, would have proved fatal to the credit of government. For a long period the Bank had experienced a pressure for money, owing partly to the demand for gold and silver which resulted from the distresses of commerce, and partly to the great drains upon the specie of the country, which the extensive loans to the Imperial government had occasioned, and the vast expenditure of the Republican and Austrian armies in Italy and Germany had required. Their requisitions and contributions, all of which required to be paid in cash, occasioned a prodigious demand for the precious metals on the Continent, and gave rise of course to a corresponding drain on this country. So early as January 1795, the influence of these causes was so severely felt, that the Bank Directors informed the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that it was their wish that he would so arrange his finances as not to depend on any further assistance from them; but the necessity of remitting the subsidies to Austria in cash, rendered this impossible. It proved,

however, such a drain upon the Bank, that, during the whole of that and the following year, the peril of the continued advances for the Imperial loans was strongly and earnestly represented to government. The pressure arising from these causes, severely experienced through the whole of 1796, was brought to a crisis in the close of that year, by the run upon the country banks, which arose from the dread of invasion, and the anxiety of every man to convert his paper into cash in the troubled times which seemed to be approaching. These banks, as the only means of averting bankruptcy, applied from all quarters to the bank of England; the panic speedily gained the metropolis, and such was the run upon that establishment, that it was in the last week of February reduced to paying in sixpences, and was on the verge of insolvency. An order in Council was then, at the eleventh hour, interposed for its relief, suspending all payments in cash, until the sense of Parliament could be taken upon the best means of restoring the circulation, and supporting the public and commercial credit of the country.¹

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1797.

26th Feb.
1 Ann. Reg.
179-180.

This great and momentous measure, fraught with such lasting and important consequences to the prosperity and fabric of society in Great Britain, was immediately made the subject of anxious and vehement debate in both Houses of Parliament. On the one hand, it was urged that this suspension of credit was not owing to any temporary disasters, but to deep, progressive, and accumulating causes; which all thinking men had long deplored, and which had grown to a head under the unhappy confidence which the House had reposed in the King's ministers; that the real cause of this calamity was to be found in the excessive and extravagant expenditure in all departments of government, and the enormous loans to foreign states; that the consequences of this measure were certain, and might be seen as in a mirror in the adjoining Republic of France. They necessarily produced a constant fall in the value of bank-notes, a rise in the price of all the articles of human consumption, augmented expenditure, and a continuance of the frantic and costly expeditions, from which both the national honour and security had already so severely suffered. On the other hand, it was contended by the friends of administration, that it

4.
Debates on
this subject
in Parlia-
ment.

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1797.

never was the intention of government to make bank-notes a legal tender ; that the measure adopted was not a permanent regulation, but a temporary expedient to enable the bank to gain time to meet the heavy demands which unexpected circumstances had brought upon it ; that the bank of England was perfectly able ultimately to make good all its engagements, and so the public had already become convinced, in the short interval which had elapsed since the Order in Council was issued ; that it was indispensable, however, that Parliament should be satisfied of this solvency, and the necessity which existed for the measure which was adopted, and therefore that the matter should be referred to a secret committee, to report on the funds and engagements of the bank of England, and the measures to be taken for its ultimate regulation.¹

¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxiii. 294,
394.

5.
Bill perpetuating this suspension, at first temporary, and at length made permanent.

² Ann. Reg.
192, 206.
Parl. Hist.
xxxiii. 294,
394, and
1028.

This measure having been carried by Mr Pitt, a committee was appointed, which reported shortly after that the funds of the Bank were £17,597,000, while its debts were only £13,770,000, leaving a balance of £3,800,000 in favour of the establishment ; but that it was necessary, for a limited time, to suspend the cash payments. Upon this, a bill for the restriction of payments in specie was introduced, which provided, that bank-notes should be received as a legal tender by the collectors of taxes, and have the effect of stopping the issuing of arrest on mesne process for payment of debt between man and man. The bill was limited in its operation to the 24th June ; but it was afterwards renewed from time to time ; and, in November 1797, continued till the conclusion of a general peace ; and the obligation on the bank to pay in specie was never again imposed till Sir Robert Peel's act in 1819.²

6.
Immense consequences of this change.

Such was the commencement of the paper system in Great Britain, which ultimately produced such astonishing effects ; which enabled the empire to carry on for so long a period so costly a war, and to maintain for years armaments greater than had been raised by the Roman people in the zenith of their power ; which brought the struggle at length to a triumphant issue, and arrayed all the forces of Eastern Europe, in English pay, against France, on the banks of the Rhine. To the same system must be ascribed ultimate effects as disastrous, as the immediate were beneficial and glorious ; the continued and

progressive rise of rents, the unceasing, and to many calamitous, fall in the value of money during the whole course of the war; increased expenditure, the growth of sanguine ideas and extravagant habits in all classes of society: unbounded speculation, prodigious profits, and frequent disasters among the commercial rich: increased wages, general prosperity, and occasional depression among the labouring poor. But these effects, which ensued during the war, were as nothing compared to those which have since the peace resulted from the return to cash payments by the bill of 1819. Perhaps no single measure ever produced so calamitous an effect as that has done. It has added at least a third to the national debt, and augmented in a similar proportion all private debt in the country, and at the same time occasioned such a fall of prices by the contraction of the currency as has destroyed the sinking fund, rendered great part of the indirect taxes unproductive, and compelled in the end a return to direct taxation in a time of general peace. Thence has arisen a vacillation of prices unparalleled in any age of the world, a creation of property in some, and destruction of it in others, which equalled, in its ultimate consequences, all but the disasters of a revolution.

The way in which these extraordinary and in the end disastrous effects have resulted from this change, and the subsequent return to cash payments is as follows:—When government paper is made, either directly, or by implication, a legal tender in all the transactions of life, two different causes may conspire to affect prices, tending to the same effect, but in very different degrees. The first is the general fall in the value of money, and consequent rise in the price of every article of life, which results from the unrestrained issue of paper; and this effect takes place without any distrust in government, from the mere increase in the circulating medium, when compared with the commodities in the general market of the nation which it represents, or is destined in its transmission from hand to hand to purchase. This change of prices proceeds on the same principles, and arises from the same causes, as the fall in the money price of grain or cattle, from an excess in the supply of these articles in the market. The second is the far greater, and sometimes unbounded depreciation, which may arise from distrust in the ultimate

7.
Double set
of causes
which affect
the value of
Government
paper.

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solvency of government, or the means which the nation possesses of making good its engagements. To this fall no limits can be assigned, because government may not be deemed capable of discharging a hundredth part of its debts: whereas the variation of prices arising from the former, seldom exceeds a duplication of their wonted amount: an effect, however, which is perfectly sufficient, if continued for any considerable time, to make one-half of the property of the kingdom change hands.

8.
True test as
to which is
in operation.

The true test of the former effect is to be found in a general rise in the prices of every commodity, but without any difference between the money value when paid in specie and when paid in paper; the mark of the latter is, not only a rise in prices, even when paid in gold or silver, but an extraordinary difference between prices when discharged in a paper and a metallic currency. Notwithstanding all that the spirit of party may have alleged, there does not appear ever to have been any traces of the latter effect in this country; or that at any period a higher price was exacted for articles when paid in bank-notes than in gold; whereas, in France, when the credit of government was almost extinct, a dinner which, when paid in gold, cost a louis,¹ could only be discharged in assignats for twenty-eight thousand francs. But the former consequences prevailed long, and with the most wide-spread effects, in this country. Every article of life was speedily doubled in price, and continued above twenty years at that high standard; and, upon the recurrence to a metallic currency in 1810, and consequent reduction of prices to a similar extent, the distress and suffering among the industrious classes long exceeded any thing ever before witnessed in our history, and produced effects which probably never can be recovered, and which have implanted the seeds of death in the British empire. But the full elucidation of this all-important subject must be reserved for the concluding chapter of this work.

¹ Lac. xiii.
40.

9.
Parliamentary Reform
brought forward by Mr
Grey.

The Opposition deemed this a favourable opportunity to bring forward their favourite project of Parliamentary Reform; as the disasters of the war, the suspension of cash payments by the bank, the mutiny of the fleet, which will be immediately noticed, and the failure of the attempt to negotiate with France, had filled all men's minds with consternation, and disposed many true patriots to doubt

the possibility of continuing the present system. On the 26th May, Mr. afterwards Earl Grey, brought forward his promised motion for a change in the system of representation, which is chiefly remarkable as containing the outlines of that vast scheme which convulsed the nation when he was at the head of affairs in 1831, and subsequently made so great a change on the British constitution. He proposed that the qualification for county electors should remain as it was, but that the members they returned should be increased from 92 to 113; that the franchise should be extended to copyholders, and leaseholders holding leases for a certain term; and that the whole remainder of the members, 400 in number, should be returned by one description of persons alone, namely, householders. His plan was, that the elections should be taken over the whole kingdom at once, and a large portion of the smaller boroughs be disfranchised. By this scheme, he contended, the landowners, the merchants, and all the respectable classes of the community, would be adequately represented; and those only excluded whom no man would wish to see retain their place in the legislature, namely, the nominees of great families, who obtained seats, not for the public good, but for their private advantage. Mr Erskine, who seconded the motion, further argued, in an eloquent speech, that, from the gradual and growing influence of the Crown, the House of Commons had become perverted from its original office, which was that of watching with jealous care over the other branches of the legislature, into the ready instrument of their abuses and encroachments; that there was now a deep and wide-spread spirit of disaffection prevalent among the people, which rendered it absolutely indispensable that their just demands should be conceded in time; that further resistance would drive them into republicanism and revolution; that the head of the government itself had once declared, that no upright or useful administration could exist while the House was constituted as it then was; that the voice of complaint could not be silenced by a sullen refusal to remedy the grievance, and though this road might be pursued for a season, yet the end of these things was death.¹ "Give, on the other hand," said he, "to the people the blessings of the constitution, and they will

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¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxiii. 646,
734.

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10.
Arguments
against it by
Mr Pitt, and
it is rejected
by Parlia-
ment.

join with ardour in its defence ; and the power of the disaffected will be permanently crippled, by severing from them all the rational and virtuous of the community." .

On the other hand, it was contended by Mr Pitt, that the real question was not whether some alteration in the system of representation might not be attended with advantage, but whether the degree of benefit was worth the chance of the mischief it might possibly, or would probably induce. That it was clearly not prudent to give an opening to principles which would never be satisfied with any concession, but would make every acquisition the means of demanding with greater effect still more extensive acquisitions ; that the fortress of the constitution was now beleaguered on all sides, and to surrender the outworks would only render it soon impossible to maintain the defence of the body of the place ; that he had himself at one period been a reformer, and he would have been so still, had men's minds been in a calm and settled state, and had he been secure that they would rest content with the redress of real grievances ; but since the commencement of the French Revolution, it was too plain that this was very far indeed from being the case. That it was impossible to believe that the men who remained unmoved by the dismal spectacle which their principles had produced in a neighbouring state—who, on the contrary, rose and fell with the success or decline of Jacobinism in every country of Europe—were actuated by similar views with those who prosecuted the cause of reform as a practical advantage, and maintained it on constitutional views ; and he could never give credit to the assertion, that the temper of moderate reformers would induce them to make common cause with the irreconcilable enemies of the constitution. That Reform was only a disguise assumed to conceal the approaches of Revolution ; and that rapine, conflagration, and murder were the necessary attendants on any innovation since the era of the French Revolution, which had entirely altered the grounds on which the question of Reform was rested, and the class of men by whom it was espoused. That these objections applied to any alteration of the government in the present heated state of men's minds ;¹ but, in addition to that, the specific plan now brought forward, was both highly exceptionable

¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxiii. 646,
734. May
26. Ann.
Reg. 253,
261.

in theory, and unsupported by experience. On a division, Mr Grey's motion was lost by a majority of 258 against 93.

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In deciding on the difficult question of Parliamentary Reform, which has so long divided, and still divides, so many able men in the country, one important consideration, to be always kept in mind, is the double effect which any change in the constitution of government must always produce, and the opposite consequences with which, according to the temper of the times, it is likely to be followed. In so far as it remedies any experienced grievance, or supplies a practical defect, or concedes powers to the people essential to the preservation of freedom, it necessarily does good; in so far as it excites democratic ambition, confers inordinate power, and awakens or fosters passions inconsistent with public tranquillity, it necessarily does mischief, and may lead to the dissolution of society. The expedience of making any considerable change, therefore, depends on the proportions in which these opposite ingredients are mingled in the proposed measure, and on the temper of the people among whom it is to take place. If the real grievance is great, and the public disposition unruffled, save by its continuance, unalloyed good may be expected from its removal, and serious peril from a denial of change. If the evil is inconsiderable or imaginary, and the people in a state of excitement from other causes, concession to their demands will probably lead to nothing but increased confusion, and more extravagant expectations. Examples exist on both sides of the rule; the gradual relaxation of the fetters of feudal tyranny, and the emancipation of the boroughs, led to the glories of European civilisation; while the concessions of Charles I., extorted by the vehemence of the Long Parliament, brought that unhappy monarch to the block; the submission of Louis to all the demands of the States-General, did not avert, but rather hastened, his tragic fate: and the granting of emancipation to the fierce outery of the Irish Catholics, instead of peace and tranquillity, brought only increased agitation and more vehement passions to the peopled shores of the Emerald Isle.

11.
Reflections
on this sub-
ject.

Applying these principles to the question of Parliamentary Reform, as it was then agitated, there seems no

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12.

Difference
between
redress of
grievances
and conces-
sions to
clamour.

doubt that the changes which were so loudly demanded could not have redressed any considerable real grievance, or removed any prolific source of discontent ; because they could not have diminished in any great degree the public burdens without stopping the war, and experience has proved in every age, that the most democratic states, so far from being pacific, are the most ambitious of military renown. From a greater infusion of popular power into the legislature, nothing but fiercer wars and additional expenses could have been anticipated. The concession, if granted, therefore, would neither have been to impatience of suffering, nor to the necessities of freedom, but to the desire of power in circumstances where it was not called for ; and such a concession is only throwing fuel on the flame. And the event has proved the truth of these principles. Reform was refused by the Commons in 1797, and so far from being either enslaved or thrown into confusion, the nation became daily freer and more united, and soon entered on a splendid and unrivalled career of glory. It was conceded by the Commons, in a period of comparative tranquillity, in 1831, and a century will not develop the ultimate effects of the change, which, hitherto at least, has done any thing rather than augment the securities of durable liberty. Still less was it called for in the former period as a safeguard to real freedom, because, though it was constantly refused for four-and-thirty years afterwards, the power of the people steadily increased during that period, and at length effected a great democratic alteration in the constitution.

13.

Arguments
against con-
tinuing the
war.

The question of continuing the war again occupied a prominent place in the debates of Parliament. On the side of the Opposition, it was contended, that, after four years of war, the addition of £200,000,000 to the national debt, and £9,000,000 annually to the taxes, the nation was further than ever from achieving the objects for which it had been undertaken ; that Holland and Flanders had successively yielded to the arms of the Republic, which, like Antæus, had risen stronger from every fall ; that all the predictions of failure in its resources had only been answered by increased conquests and more splendid victories ; that the minister was not sincere in his desire for a negotiation, or he would have proposed

very different terms from those actually offered, to which it was impossible to expect that a victorious enemy would accede; that the real object, it was evident, was only to gain time, to put France apparently in the wrong, and throw upon its government the blame of continuing hostilities, which had been unfortunately gained through the diplomatic skill evinced by the British ministers in the course of a negotiation begun with the most hollow intentions.¹

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¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxii. 30th
Dec. 1796.
Ann. Reg.
1797, 152.

Mr Pitt lamented the sudden and unforeseen stop put to the negotiations, by which he had fondly hoped that a termination would be put to a contest into which we had been unwillingly dragged. This failure was a subject of regret and disappointment; but it was regret without despondency, and disappointment without despair. "We wish for peace," said he, "but on such terms as will secure its real blessings, and not serve as a cover merely to secret preparations for renewed hostilities; we may expect to see, as the result of the conduct we have pursued, England united and France divided; we have offered peace on the condition of giving up all our conquests to obtain better terms for our allies; but our offers have been rejected, our ambassador insulted, and not even the semblance of terms offered in return. In these circumstances, then, are we to persevere in the war with a spirit and energy worthy of the English name, or to prostrate ourselves at the feet of a haughty and supercilious republic, to do what they require, and submit to all they shall impose? I hope there is not a hand in his Majesty's councils which would sign the proposals, that there is not a heart in the House that would sanction the measure, nor an individual in the British dominions who would serve as courier on the occasion."²

14.
Mr Pitt's
answer.

² Parl. Hist.
xxxii. 1796,
Dec. 30.
Ann. Reg.
1797, 153.

Parliament having determined, by a great majority in both Houses, to continue the contest with vigour, supplies were voted proportioned to the magnitude of the armaments which were required. The sums for the expenses of the war, in two successive budgets, amounted, exclusive of the interest of the debt, to £42,800,000. In this immense aggregate were included two loans, one of £18,000,000 and another of £16,000,000, besides an Imperial subsidy of £2,500,000, guaranteed by the British government. To

15.
Supplies
voted for
the year.

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¹ Ann. Reg.
128, 132.
Chron. 3.

defray the interest of these loans, new taxes, to the amount of £2,400,000 were imposed. The land forces voted for the year were 195,000 men, of whom 61,000 were in the British islands, and the remainder in the colonial dependencies of the empire. The ships in commission were 124 of the line, eighteen of fifty guns, 180 frigates, and 184 sloops. This great force, however, being scattered over the whole globe, could hardly be assembled in considerable strength at any particular point; and hence, notwithstanding the magnitude of the British navy upon the whole, they were generally inferior to their enemies in every engagement.

16.
Naval pre-
parations of
France and
Spain.

On the other hand, the naval forces of France and her allies had now become very considerable. Nowise discouraged by the unfortunate issue of the previous attempt against Ireland, the indefatigable Truguet was combining the means of bringing an overwhelming force into the Channel. Twenty-seven ships of the line were to proceed from the Spanish shores, raise the blockade of all the French harbours, and unite with the Dutch fleet from the Texel, in the Channel, where they expected to assemble sixty-five or seventy ships of the line; a force much greater than any which England could oppose to them in that quarter. To frustrate these designs, the British Government had only eighteen ships of the line, under Lord Bridport, in the Channel, fifteen under Admiral Jarvis, off Corunna, and sixteen under Admiral Duncan, off the Texel; in all forty-nine: forces much inferior to those of the enemy, if they had been all joined together. This is sufficient to demonstrate by what a slender thread the naval supremacy of England was held, at the very time when the victories of France enabled her to combine against these islands all the maritime forces of Europe; and how vast is the debt of gratitude she owes to those heroic minds who compensated this inferiority in physical resources, by an energy and patriotism which never were surpassed in the annals of mankind.²

² Ann. Reg.
94, 95. Jom.
x. 195.

But great as this peril was, it was rendered incomparably more alarming, by a calamity of a kind and in a quarter where it was least expected. This was the famous *Mutiny in the Fleet*, which, at the very time that the enemies of England were most formidable, and her finances most

embarrassed, threatened to deprive her of her most trusty defenders, and brought the state to the very verge of destruction. Unknown to government, or at least without their having taken it into serious consideration, a feeling of discontent had for a very long period prevailed in the British navy. This was, no doubt, partly brought to maturity by the democratic and turbulent spirit which had spread from France through the adjoining states; but it had its origin in a variety of real grievances which existed, and must, if unredressed, have sooner or later brought on an explosion. The sailors complained with reason, that while all the articles of life had more than doubled in price in the last century and a half, and risen with extraordinary rapidity since the present war commenced, their present pay had not been augmented since the reign of Charles II.; that prize-money was unequally distributed, and an undue proportion given to the officers; that discipline was maintained with excessive and undue severity, and that the conduct of the officers towards the men was harsh and revolting. These evils, long felt and murmured against, were rendered more exasperating by the inflammatory acts of a number of persons of superior station, whom the general distress arising from commercial embarrassment had driven into the navy, and who persuaded the sailors, that, by acting unanimously and decidedly, they would speedily obtain redress of their grievances. The influence of these new entrants appeared in the secrecy and ability with which the measures of the malcontents were taken, and the general extension of the conspiracy, before its existence was known to the officers of the fleet.¹

The prevalence of these discontents was made known to Lord Howe and the Lords of the Admiralty, by a variety of anonymous communications, during the whole spring of 1797; but they met with no attention; and, upon enquiry at the captains of vessels, they were so ill informed, that they all declared, that no mutinous dispositions existed on board of their respective ships. Meanwhile, however, a vast conspiracy, unknown to them, was already organised, which was brought to maturity on the return of the Channel fleet to port in the beginning of April; and on the signal being made from the Queen Charlotte, by Lord Bridport,

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1797.

17.

Mutiny in
the fleet
its origin.

¹ Ann. Reg.
207, 208, 209.
Jom. x. 196,
202.

18.

First breaks
out in the
Channel
Fleet. Per-
fect order
preserved
by the
mutineers.

5th April.

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to weigh anchor on the 15th of that month, instead of obeying, its crew gave three cheers, which were returned by every vessel in the fleet, and the red flag of mutiny was hoisted at every mast-head. In this perilous crisis, the officers of the fleet exerted themselves to the utmost to bring back their crews to a state of obedience; but all their efforts were in vain. Meanwhile, the fleet being completely in possession of the insurgents, they used their power firmly, but to the honour of England be it said, with humanity and moderation. Order and discipline were universally observed; the most scrupulous attention was paid to the officers; those most obnoxious were sent ashore without molestation; delegates were appointed from all the ships to meet in Lord Howe's cabin, an oath to support the common cause was administered to every man in the fleet, and ropes were reeved to the yard-arm of every vessel as a signal of the punishment that would be inflicted on those that betrayed it. Three days afterwards two petitions were forwarded, one to the Admiralty, and one to the House of Commons, drawn up in the most respectful, and even touching terms, declaring their unshaken loyalty to their king and country, but detailing the grievances of which they complained; that their pay had not been augmented since the reign of Charles II., though every article of life had advanced at least one-third in value; that the pensions of Chelsea were £13, while those of Greenwich still remained at £7; that their allowance of provisions was insufficient, and that the pay of wounded seamen was not continued till they were cured or discharged.¹

8th April.

¹ Ann. Reg.
209 Journ.
x. 209.

19.
The demands of
the fleet are
granted by
the government.

This unexpected mutiny produced the utmost alarm both in the country and the government; and the Board of Admiralty was immediately transferred to Portsmouth to endeavour to appease it. Earl Spencer hastened to the spot, and after some negotiation, the demands of the fleet were acceded to by the Admiralty, it being agreed that the pay of able-bodied seamen should be raised to a shilling a-day; that of petty officers and ordinary seamen in the same proportion, and the Greenwich pension augmented to ten pounds. This, however, the seamen refused to accept, unless it was ratified by royal proclamation and act of Parliament; the red flag, which had been struck,

7th May.

was rehoisted, and the fleet, after subordination had been in some degree restored, again broke out into open mutiny. Government, upon this, sent down Lord Howe to reassure the mutineers, and convince them of the good faith with which they were animated. The personal influence of this illustrious man, the many years he had commanded the Channel fleet, the recollection of his glorious victory at its head, all conspired to induce the sailors to listen to his representations; and in consequence of his assurance that government would faithfully keep its promises, and grant an unlimited amnesty for the past, the whole fleet returned to its duty, and a few days afterwards put to sea, amounting to twenty-one ships of the line, to resume the blockade of Brest harbour.¹

The bloodless termination of this revolt, and the concession to the seamen of what all felt to be their just demands, diffused a general joy throughout the nation; but this satisfaction was of short duration. On the 22d May the fleet at the Nore, forming part of Lord Duncan's squadron, broke out into open mutiny, and on the 6th June they were joined by all the vessels of that fleet, from the blockading station off the Texel, excepting his own line-of-battle ship and two frigates. These ships drew themselves up in order of battle across the Thames, stopped all vessels going up or down the river, appointed delegates and a provisional government for the fleet, and compelled the ships, whose crews were thought to be wavering, to take their station in the middle of the formidable array. At the head of the insurrection was a man of the name of Parker, a seaman on board the Sandwich, who assumed the title of "President of the Floating Republic," and was distinguished by undaunted resolution and no small share of ability. Their demands related chiefly to the unequal distribution of prize-money, which had been overlooked by the Channel mutineers; but they went so far in other respects, and were couched in such a menacing strain, as to be justly deemed totally inadmissible by government. At intelligence of this alarming insurrection, the utmost consternation seized all classes in the nation. Every thing seemed to be failing at once. Their armies had been defeated, the bank had suspended payment, and now the fleet, the pride and glory of England, appeared on the

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1797.

¹ Ann. Reg.
211. Jom.
x. 203, 204.

20.
Alarming
mutiny at
the Nore,
and consternation in
London.
22d May.
6th June.

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XXII.

1797.

¹ Ann. Reg.
215, 217.

Jom. x. 205.

point of deserting the national colours. The citizens of London dreaded a stoppage of the colliers, and all the usual supplies of the metropolis; the public creditors apprehended the speedy dissolution of government, and the cessation of their wonted payments from the treasury. Despair seized upon the boldest hearts; and such was the general panic, that the three per cents were sold as low as 45, after having been nearly 100 before the commencement of the war. Never, during the whole contest, had the consternation been so great, and never was England placed so near the verge of destruction.¹

21.
Firmness of
the King and
government.

Fortunately for Great Britain, and the cause of freedom throughout the world, a Monarch was on the throne whose firmness no danger could shake, and a Minister at the helm whose capacity was equal to any emergency. Perceiving that the success of the mutineers in the Channel fleet had augmented the audacity of the sailors, and given rise to the present formidable insurrection, and conscious that the chief real grievances had been redressed, government resolved to make a stand, and adopted the most energetic measures to face the danger. All the buoys at the mouth of the Thames were removed; Sheerness, which was menaced with a bombardment from the insurgent ships, was garrisoned with four thousand men; red-hot balls were kept in constant readiness; the fort of Tilbury was armed with a hundred pieces of heavy cannon; and a chain of gun-boats sunk to debar access to the harbour of London. These energetic measures restored the public confidence; the nation rallied round a monarch and an administration who were not wanting to themselves in this extremity; and all the armed men, sailors, and merchants in London, voluntarily took an oath to stand by their country in this eventful crisis.²

² Ann. Reg.
216, 217.

Jom. x. 206.

22.
Noble con-
duct of Par-
liament.
Bill against
the muti-
neers
passed.

The conduct of Parliament on this trying occasion was worthy of its glorious history. The revolt of the fleet was formally communicated to both Houses by the King on the 1st June, and immediately taken into consideration. The greater part of the Opposition, and especially Mr Fox, at first held back, and seemed rather disposed to turn the public danger into the means of overturning the administration; but Mr Sheridan came nobly forward, and threw the weight of his great name and thrilling eloquence into

the balance in favour of his country. "Shall we yield," said he, "to mutinous sailors? Never; for in one moment we should extinguish three centuries of glory." Awakened by this splendid example to more worthy feelings, the Opposition at length joined the administration, and a bill for the suppression of the mutiny passed by a great majority, through both Houses of Parliament. By this act, it was declared death for any person to hold communication with the sailors in mutiny after the revolt had been declared by proclamation; and all persons who should endeavour to seduce either soldiers or sailors from their duty were liable to the same punishment. This bill was opposed by Sir Francis Burdett, and a few of the most violent of the Opposition, upon the ground that conciliation and concession were the only course which could ensure speedy submission. But Mr Pitt's reply—that the tender feelings of these brave but misguided men were the sole avenue which remained open to recall them to their duty, and that a separation from their wives, their children, and their country, would probably induce the return to duty which could alone obtain a revival of that intercourse of affection—was justly deemed conclusive, and the bill accordingly passed.¹

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¹ Parl. Deb. xxxiii. 802, 803, 816, 817. Ann. Reg. 218, 219.

Meanwhile a negotiation was conducted by the Admiralty, who repaired on the first alarm to Sheerness, and received a deputation from the mutineers; but their demands were so unreasonable, and urged in so threatening a manner, that they had the appearance of having been brought forward to exclude all accommodation, and justify, by their refusal, the immediate recurrence to extreme measures. These parleys, however, gave government time to sow dissension among the insurgents, by representing the hopeless nature of the contest with the whole nation in which they were engaged, and the unreasonable nature of the demands on which they insisted.* By degrees they became sensible that they had engaged in a desperate enterprise; the whole sailors on board the Channel fleet gave a splendid proof of genuine patriotism, by reprobating their proceedings, and earnestly imploring them to return to their duty. This remonstrance, coupled with the energetic conduct of both Parliament and government, and the general disapprobation of the nation, gra-

23. The insurgents are divided. Patriotic conduct of the Channel fleet, and suppression of the mutiny.

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June 9.

dually checked the spirit of insubordination. On the 9th June, two ships of the line slipped their cables and abandoned the insurgents, amidst a heavy fire from the whole line; on the 13th, three other line-of-battle ships and two frigates openly left them, and took refuge under the cannon of Sheerness; on the following day, several others followed their example; and at length, on the 15th, the whole remaining ships struck the red flag of mutiny, and the communication between the ocean and the metropolis was restored. Parker, the leader of the insurrection, was seized on board his own ship, and, after a solemn trial, condemned to death; a punishment which he underwent with great firmness, acknowledging the justice of his sentence, and hoping only that mercy would be extended to his associates. Several of the other leaders of the revolt were found guilty, and executed; but some escaped from on board the prison-ship, and got safe to Calais, and a large number, still under sentence of death, were pardoned, by royal proclamation, after the glorious victory of Camperdown.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
216, 217.
Journ. x. 207,
208.

24.
Admirable
conduct of
Mr Pitt on
this occa-
sion.

The suppression of this dangerous revolt with so little bloodshed, and the extrication of the nation from the greatest peril in which it had been placed since the time of the Spanish Armada, is the most glorious event in the reign of George III. and in the administration of Pitt.* Disdaining to submit to the audacious demands of the mutineers, refusing to treat with them even when they held the capital blockaded, they remained resolute in presence of the "floating Republic" at the mouth of the Thames, without withdrawing a single ship from the blockade, of Brest, Cadiz, or the Texel. The conduct adopted towards the insurgents may be regarded as a masterpiece of political wisdom; and the happiest example of that union of firmness and humanity, of justice and concession, which can alone bring a government safely through such a crisis.

* The magnanimous conduct of the British government on this occasion was fully appreciated on the Continent. "Let us figure to ourselves," says Prince Hardenberg, "Richard Parker, a common sailor, the leader of the revolt, taking, at Sheerness, the title of Admiral of the Fleet, and the fleet itself, consisting of eleven sail of the line and four frigates, assuming the title of the Floating Republic; and, nevertheless, recollect, that the English, but recently recovered from a financial crisis, remained undaunted in presence of such a revolt, and did not withdraw one vessel from the blockade of Brest, Cadiz, or the Texel! It was the firmness of ancient Rome."—HARD. iv. 432.

By at once conceding all the just demands of the Channel fleet, and proclaiming a general pardon for a revolt which had too much ground for its justification, they deprived the disaffected of all real grounds of complaint, and detached from their cause all the patriotic portion of the navy; while, by resolutely withstanding the audacious demands of the Nore mutineers, they checked the spirit of democracy which had arisen out of those very concessions themselves. For such is the singular combination of good and bad principles in human nature, and such the disposition of man, on the least opening being afforded, to run riot, that not only do our virtues border upon vices, but even from acts of justice the most deplorable consequences frequently flow; and unless a due display of firmness accompanies concessions, dictated by a spirit of humanity, they too often are imputed to fear, and increase the very turbulent spirit they were intended to remove.

Admiral Duncan's conduct at this critical juncture was above all praise. He was with his fleet blockading the Texel, when intelligence of the insurrection was received, and immediately four ships of the line deserted to the mutineers, leaving him with an inferior force in presence of the enemy. They were speedily followed by several others; and at length the admiral, in his own ship, with two frigates, was left alone on the station. In this extremity his firmness did not forsake him: he called his crew on deck, and addressed them in one of those speeches of touching and manly eloquence, so well known in antiquity, which at once melt the human heart.* His crew were dissolved in tears, and declared, in the most energetic

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23.
Glorious
firmness of
Admiral
Duncan at
this crisis.

* "My Lads,—I once more call you together, with a sorrowful heart, from what I have lately seen of the disaffection of the fleets: I call it disaffection, for they have no grievances. To be deserted by my fleet, in the face of the enemy, is a disgrace which, I believe, never before happened to a British admiral, nor could I have supposed it possible. My greatest comfort, under God, is, that I have been supported by the officers, seamen, and marines of this ship, for which, with a heart overflowing with gratitude, I request you to accept my sincere thanks. I flatter myself, much good may result from your example, by bringing those deluded people to a sense of the duty which they owe not only to their king and country, but to themselves.

"The British navy has ever been the support of that liberty which has been handed down to us from our ancestors, and which, I trust, we shall maintain to the latest posterity; and that can only be done by unanimity and obedience. This ship's company, and others, who have distinguished themselves by their loyalty and good order, deserve to be, and doubtless will be, the favourites of a grateful nation. They will also have from their

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manner, their unshaken loyalty, and resolution to abide by him in life or death. Encouraged by this heroic conduct, he declared his determination to maintain the blockade, and, undismayed by the defection of so large a part of his squadron, remained off the Texel with his little but faithful remnant. By stationing one of the ships in the offing, and frequently making signals, as if to the remainder of the fleet, he succeeded in deceiving the Dutch admiral, who imagined that the vessels in sight were only the inshore squadron, and kept his station until the remainder of his ships joined him after the suppression of the insurrection.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
214. Jom.
x. 211.

26.
The mutiny
was totally
unconnected
with France.

It was naturally imagined at the time that this formidable mutiny had been in part at least instigated by the arts of the French government. But though they were naturally highly elated at such an unexpected piece of good fortune, and anxious to turn it to the best advantage, and though the revolutionary spirit which was abroad was unquestionably one cause of the commotion, there is no reason to believe that it arose from the instigation of the Directory, or was at all connected with any treasonable or seditious projects. On the contrary, after the minutest investigation, it appeared that the grievances complained of were entirely of a domestic character, that the hearts of the sailors were throughout true to their country, and that at the very time when they were blockading the Thames in so menacing a manner, they would have fought the French fleet with the same spirit as was afterwards evinced in the glorious victory of Camperdown. The ultimate consequences of this insurrection, as of most other popular

inward feelings a comfort which will be lasting, and not like the floating and false confidence of those who have swerved from their duty.

"It has been often my pride with you to look into the Texel, and see a foe which dreaded coming out to meet us. My pride is now humbled indeed!—my feelings cannot easily be expressed. Our cup has overflowed, and made us wanton. The allwise Providence has given us this check as a warning, and I hope we shall improve by it. On Him, then, let us trust, where our only security is to be found. I find there are many good men among us; for my own part, I have had full confidence in all in this ship, and once more beg to express my approbation of your conduct."

"May God, who has thus far conducted you, continue to do so; and may the British navy, the glory and support of our country, be restored to its wonted splendour, and be not only the bulwark of Britain, but the terror of the world. But this can only be effected by a strict adherence to our duty and obedience; and let us pray that the Almighty God may keep us all in the right way of thinking.—God bless you all!"—*Ann. Reg.* 1797, 214.

commotions which originate in real grievances, and are candidly but firmly met by government, were highly beneficial. The attention of the cabinet was forcibly turned to the sources of discontent in the navy, and from that to the corresponding grievances in the army; and the result was a series of changes which, in a very great degree, improved the condition of officers and men in both services. The pay of the common soldiers was raised to its present standard of a shilling a-day; and those admirable regulations were soon after adopted in regard to pensions, prize-money, and retired allowances, which have justly endeared the memories of the Duke of York and Lord Melville to privates of the army and navy.¹

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¹ Ann. Reg.
219, 222;
and State
papers, 242.
Journ. x. 220

It was not in the Channel and North Sea fleets alone, however, that this dangerous mutiny had its ramifications. Disturbances of a less conspicuous, but not less serious kind, soon after appeared in the fleet off Cadiz, which, had an admiral less firm and energetic than Earl St Vincent been at its head, would in all probability have been attended with the most disastrous consequences. So wide-spread was the spirit of disaffection in that fleet, that even the glorious victory of St Vincent, to be immediately noticed, could not extinguish it. A dangerous member of the London Corresponding Society, which had been checked, but not extinguished by the trial of Hardy and Horne Tooke, named Bott, had got on board, and spread far and wide the seditious spirit by which that society was animated. It extended through nearly all the ships in the fleet. In the *Romulus* it first appeared, and the captain only succeeded in appeasing it for the time by a promise that the vessel should on a certain day proceed to England. St Vincent ratified it, but the day before the ship sailed, he drafted every man out of her, and sent her home with another crew. But it was on the arrival of Sir Roger Curtis' squadron, which joined the fleet from the Channel in September 1797, that the mutiny became most alarming. It broke out with great violence on board the *Marlborough*, *Lion*, and *Centaur*, part of Sir Rogers's squadron, which had with great difficulty been kept in a state of subordination during the voyage from Spithead. A court-martial was forthwith assembled on board the flag-ship, and one of the principal ringleaders having been sentenced to be

27.
Mutiny in
the fleet off
Cadiz.
Sept. 1797.

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hanged, St Vincent, according to his invariable practice, ordered him "to be executed by the crew of the *Marlborough alone*, no part of the boats' crews from other ships assisting on the occasion." The commander of the *Marlborough*, Captain Ellison, represented that the crew of his vessel would not obey the order, and requested the aid of other boats' crews as usual on such occasions ; but St Vincent sternly replied,—“ Captain Ellison, you are an old officer, have suffered severely in the service, and lost an arm in action, but that man *shall be hanged* at eight o'clock to-morrow morning, *and by his own ship's company*, for not another hand from any other ship in the fleet shall touch the rope.” He took, however, the most effectual measures to support Captain Ellison in the discharge of this trying duty. All the launches in the fleet, armed with heavy carronades and twelve rounds of ball cartridge, were ordered to be in attendance, manned by trusty crews and gunners, under the command of an iron veteran, Captain Campbell of the *Blenheim*. The orders of St Vincent to him were, “ if any symptoms of mutiny appeared in the *Marlborough*, any attempt to open her ports, or any resistance to hanging the prisoner, he was to proceed close to the ship, fire into her, and continue to fire till all mutiny or resistance should cease ; and if it should become absolutely necessary, to sink the ship in the face of the fleet.”¹

¹ Tucker's
St Vincent,
i. 304, 307.

28.
Execution
of a pri-
soner.

At seven next morning, all the launches, thus armed, proceeded to the *Marlborough*, and took a position within pistol-shot of that vessel, athwart her bows : their guns were then loaded. At half-past seven, on a signal from the admiral's ship, all the hands on board the fleet were turned up to witness the punishment, and at a quarter before eight a powerfully armed boat quitted the flag-ship, bearing the prisoner to be executed by his own crew. It speedily neared the *Marlborough* ; the man was taken up, placed on the cat-head, and the halter put about his neck. An awful silence of a few minutes ensued ; every eye in the fleet was bent in intense anxiety on the prisoner : the crisis was come ; discipline or mutiny in a few seconds would prevail. The watch-bells of the fleet at length struck eight ; a gun at the same moment was discharged from the flag-ship, and instantly the man was hoisted in the air ; he soon dropped again, however, for the men at the rope

had unintentionally let it slip. The anxiety throughout the fleet now became unbearable, for it was thought the crew had resisted the order. Presently, however, he was hauled up to one of the yard-arms with a run. Lord St Vincent, for the first time turning aside his eye, said, "The law is satisfied ; discipline has been preserved."¹

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¹ Tucker's
St Vincent,
i. 306, 308.

This was the crisis of the mutiny ; its spirit was indeed far from being extinguished, and dangerous disturbances afterwards broke out on board particular vessels ; but there was no disposition evinced again to contest the power of the law. What principally tended to keep alive this alarming spirit, was the frequent arrival of ships from England, several of which were in a state of open mutiny, and nearly all brought a profusion of disaffection to the rest. Frequent mutinies broke out during the winter, and the dreadful sentence of the law was again and again inflicted ; but they were all suppressed, and subordination at length, though not till a considerable period had elapsed, was restored throughout the fleet, by the unflinching energy and iron determination of Earl St Vincent. The mutinous spirit was not now entirely confined to the redressing of domestic grievances, or evils complained of in the service. Excited by the agents of the Corresponding Society in England, it aimed at revolution, and tended to an alliance with the enemies of their country. The mutineers on board the Princess Royal pointed to Cadiz as their future country. It required all St Vincent's firmness and energy to extinguish the wide-spread spirit, but he was equal to the crisis. When the St George arrived from England with some rebels in irons, whom Captain Piard had with dauntless courage seized, a court-martial was immediately summoned, who pronounced sentence on Saturday on the principal mutineers, and it was carried into execution next morning, *though it was Sunday*—a deviation from established usage which made a great impression on the fleet, as evincing the unflinching determination of the commander-in-chief. At length the disaffection wore out ; the rebels finding that their reasonable demands had been conceded by government, and that their traitorous designs were met with ceaseless vigilance, and chastised with unbending rigour.²

29.

Continu-
ance and
final sup-
pression of
the mutiny.

² Tucker,
i. 306, 312.

But whatever may have been the internal dissensions of the British fleet, never did it appear more terrible and

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30.

Battle of
Cape St
Vincent,
Feb. 14.

irresistible to its foreign enemies than during this eventful year. Early in February, the Spanish fleet, consisting of twenty-seven ships of the line, and twelve frigates, put to sea, with the design of steering for Brest, raising the blockade of that harbour, forming a junction with the Dutch fleet, and clearing the Channel of the British squadron. This design, the same as that which Napoleon afterwards adopted in 1805, was defeated by one of the most memorable victories ever recorded even in the splendid annals of the English navy. Admiral Jarvis, who was stationed off the coast of Portugal, had, by the greatest efforts, and a degree of vigour almost unparalleled even in the glorious annals of the English navy, at length succeeded in repairing the various most serious losses which his fleet had sustained during the storms of winter, and at this period lay in the Tagus with fifteen sail of the line, and six frigates. The moment he heard of the enemy's having sailed, he instantly put to sea, and was cruising off CAPE ST VINCENT, when he received intelligence of their approach, and immediately prepared for battle. He bore down on the starboard tack, in two lines, the ships being in the most compact order, standing to the south before the wind, and, nothing daunted by the great superiority of force, nearly two to one, which they presented to his own squadron, succeeded in breaking the enemy's line between the eighteenth and nineteenth ships of the Spanish fleet, where there was a considerable opening.* Captain Troubridge in the Culloden led the van of the leading column, and passing slowly through the line poured two tremendous broadsides, double-shotted, into the enemy's three-deckers; the other ships followed, opening a dreadful fire on the right and left as they passed through. No sooner had he crossed the enemy's line, than Troubridge tacked again,

* Lord St Vincent's expressions on this occasion as they neared the combined fleet, and the numbers of the enemy were announced, were highly characteristic. He was walking the quarterdeck when the successive ships were called out—"There are eighteen sail of the line, Sir John."—"Very well, sir."—"There are twenty sail of the line, Sir John."—"Very well, sir."—"There are twenty-five sail of the line, Sir John."—"Very well, sir."—"There are twenty-seven sail of the line, Sir John; near double our own."—"Enough, sir—no more of that, sir: the die is cast: if there were fifty sail of the line I will go through them."—"That's right, Sir John," cried Hallowell, his worthy flag-captain; "that's right, and a good licking we shall give them." Such were the men, such the spirit by which the British empire in those heroic days was saved.—See TUCKER'S *Life of St Vincent*, i. 255-6.

and, followed by the *Blenheim*, *Prince George*, *Orion*, and *Irresistible*, engaged in close combat the weather division of the enemy, which had been separated from the rest of the fleet.* He thus succeeded in engaging the enemy, who were loosely scattered, and yet straggling in disorderly array, in close combat, before they had time to form in regular order of battle. By a vigorous cannonade, these ships drove the nine Spanish vessels which had been cut off to leeward, so as to prevent their taking any part in the engagement which followed. The Spanish admiral, upon this, endeavoured to regain the lost part of his fleet, and was wearing round the rear of the British lines, when Commodore NELSON, who was in the sternmost ship, perceiving his design, disregarded his orders, stood directly towards him, and precipitated himself into the very middle of the hostile squadron.[†]

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¹ Nelson's Narrative. Collingwood, i. 53. Brenton, i. 340. Tucker, i. 255. Vict. et Conq. viii. 253.

Bravely seconded by Captain COLLINGWOOD in the *Excellent*, Nelson wore and made all sail to aid the *Culloden*, now closely engaged. He ran his ship, the Captain, of seventy-four guns, between two Spanish three-deckers, the *Santissima Trinidad*, of 136 guns, commanded by Admiral Cordova, and the *San Josef*, of 112; and succeeded, by a tremendous fire to the right and left, in compelling the former to strike, although it escaped in consequence of Nelson not being able, in the confusion of so close a fight, to take possession of his noble prize. The action, on the part of these gallant men, continued for nearly an hour with the utmost fury against fearful odds, which were more than compensated by the skill of the British sailors and the rapidity of their fire. Meanwhile, the *Principe de Asturias*, bearing the Spanish vice-admiral's

31.
First appearance of Nelson and Collingwood.

* So delighted was St Vincent with this movement, that on seeing it he said: "Look at Troubridge; he tacks his ship to battle as if the eyes of all England were upon him;—and would they were, for then they would see him as I know him to be, and, by heaven, sir! as the *Dons* will soon feel him."—TUCKER, i. 258.

† This gallant movement of Nelson's was in opposition to his orders, though imperatively called for by change of circumstances, and on this account it was, in all probability, that Nelson's name was not mentioned in St Vincent's official dispatch. But he fully appreciated the importance of the movement. Captain Calder having in the evening hinted that the spontaneous movement of Nelson and Collingwood was unauthorised, St Vincent, answered, "It certainly was so; and if ever you commit such a breach of your orders, I will forgive you also." After the engagement, St Vincent received Nelson on board his flag-ship in the most flattering manner.—TUCKER'S *Life of St Vincent*, i. 262.

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flag, made a gallant attempt to break the British line, but was frustrated by Jarvis in the Victory throwing in stays, and while doing so, received a dreadful broadside from that ship. At the same time Collingwood engaged the *Salvador del Mundo* of 112 guns. The action began when the two ships were not more than fifty yards apart, but such was the tremendous effect of the Englishman's broadsides, that in a quarter of an hour the Spanish three-decker struck her colours, and her firing ceased; upon which that noble officer, disdaining to take possession of beaten enemies, and seeing his old messmate, Nelson, a-head and hard pressed by greatly superior forces, passed on, and the *Salvador*, relieved from her antagonist, again hoisted her colours, and recommenced the action. But she was again compelled to strike, and finally taken possession of by one of the ships which followed. Collingwood immediately came alongside the *San Isidro*, seventy-four, so close, that a man might leap from the one to the other, the two vessels engaging thus at the muzzles of their guns. The combat was not of long duration; in ten minutes the Spaniard struck, and was taken possession of by the Lively frigate, to whom the Admiral made signal to secure the prize.¹

Though Collingwood had thus already forced two Spanish line-of-battle ships, one of which was a three-decker, to strike to him, with seventy-four guns only, yet he was not contented with his achievement, but pushed on to relieve Nelson, who was now engaged with the *San Nicholas* and *San Josef* on one side, and the huge four-decker the *Santissima Trinidad*, on the other. So close did he approach the former of these vessels, that, to use his own words, you "could not put a bodkin between them," and the shot from the English passed through both the Spanish vessels, and actually struck Nelson's balls from the other side. After a short engagement, the Spaniard's fire ceased on that quarter; and Collingwood, seeing Nelson's ship effectually succoured, passed on, and engaged the *Santissima Trinidad*, which already had been assailed by several British ships in succession. No sooner was Nelson relieved by Collingwood's fire, than, resuming his wonted energy, he boarded the *San Nicholas*, of seventy-four guns, which had fallen on board the *San Josef*, of 112 guns, now entirely disabled by the Captain's fire.² Barry, Nelson's

¹ Nelson's Narrative. Collingwood, i. 53. Collingwood's Mem. i. 47, 48. Brenton, i. 340, 341. Southey's Nelson, i. 170, 174.

32. Glorious successes of Collingwood and Nelson.

² Nelson's Narrative. Collingwood, i. 53. Collingwood's Mem. i. 48, 49. Southey's Nelson, i. 170. James, ii. 46, 51. Brenton's Life of St Vincent, ii. 309, 310. Vict. et Conq. viii. 253, 254.

first lieutenant, was the first who got on board, by jumping into the enemy's mizen-chains; he was quickly followed by the soldiers of the 69th, who were on board, and Nelson himself. Resistance was soon overcome, they speedily hoisted the British colours on the poop; and finding that the prize was severely galled by a fire from the decks of the San Josef, with which she was entangled, Nelson pushed on across it to its gigantic neighbour, himself leading the way, and exclaiming. "Westminster Abbey, or victory!" Nothing could resist such enthusiastic courage; the Spanish admiral speedily hauled down his colours, presenting his sword to Nelson on his own quarter-deck while the English ship lay a perfect wreck beside its two noble prizes.¹

While Nelson and Collingwood were thus precipitating themselves with unexampled hardihood into the centre of the enemy's squadron on the larboard, the other column of the fleet, headed by Sir John Jarvis in the Victory of 100 guns, was also engaged in the most gallant and successful manner: though, from being the van on the starboard tack, by which the enemy's line was pierced, they were the rear on the larboard, where Nelson had begun his furious attack. The Victory, passing under the stern of the Salvador del Mundo, followed by the Barfleur, Admiral Waldgrave, poured the most destructive broadsides into that huge three-decker, which surrendered, and was secured, having previously been silenced by the Orion, Captain Saumarez. These ships, moving on, engaged in succession the Santissima Trinidad, whose tremendous fire from her four decks seemed to threaten destruction to every lesser opponent which approached her. At length, after having been most gallantly fought by Jarvis and Collingwood, she struck to Captain, now Lord de Saumarez, in the Orion; but that intrepid officer being intent on still greater achievements, did not heave to, in order to take possession; but thinking it sufficient that she had hoisted the white flag on her quarter and the British union-jack over it, passed on, leaving to the ship astern the easy task of taking possession. Unfortunately, in the smoke, this vessel did not perceive the token of surrender; but moved on a-head of the Santissima Trinidad after the admiral, so that the captured Spaniard was encouraged, though dismantled, to try to get off,¹ and ultimately

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53.
Action in
the other
parts of the
fleet.

¹ Ann. Reg. 94, 95. App. to Chron. 74. Jom. x. 198. Southey's Nelson, i. 170, 176. James, ii. 46, 63. De Saumarez's Life, i. 171, 175. Brenton, i. 341, 342, and Life of St Vincent, i. 310, 311. Vict. et Conq. viii. 253, 254.

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effected her escape. The remainder of the Spanish fleet now rapidly closed in and deprived Captain Saumarez of his magnificent prize ; but the British squadron kept possession of the San Josef and Salvador, each of 112 guns, and the San Nicholas and San Isidro of 74 each. Towards evening the detached part of the Spanish fleet rejoined the main body, and thereby formed a force still greatly superior to the British squadron ; yet such was the consternation produced by the losses they had experienced, and the imposing aspect of the English fleet, that they made no attempt to regain their lost vessels, but, after a distant cannonade, retreated in the night towards Cadiz, whither they were immediately followed and blockaded by the victors.

34.
Great effect
produced by
his victory.

This important victory, which delivered England from all fears of invasion, by preventing the threatened junction of the hostile fleets, was achieved with the loss of only three hundred men, of whom nearly one-half were on board Nelson's ship, while above five hundred were lost on board the Spanish ships which struck alone ; a signal proof how much less bloody sea-fights are than those between land forces, and a striking example of the great effects which sometimes follow an inconsiderable expenditure of human life on that element, compared to the trifling results which attend fields of carnage in military warfare.* Admiral Jarvis followed the beaten fleet to Cadiz, whither they had retired in the deepest dejection, and with tarnished honour. The defeat of so great an armament by little more than half their number, and the evident superiority of skill and seamanship which it evinced in the British navy, filled all Europe with astonishment, and demonstrated on what doubtful grounds the Republicans rested their hopes of subduing these islands. The decisive nature of the victory was speedily evinced by the bombardment of Cadiz on three different occasions, under the direction of Commodore Nelson ; and although these attacks were more insulting than hurtful to the Spanish ships, yet they evinced the magnitude of the disaster which they had sustained, and inflicted a grievous wound on the pride of the Castilians.*¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
96. Jom.
x. 200.
James, ii. 63.
July.

* St Vincent was well aware of the vast importance of a victory to England at that critical moment. He said, when bearing down on the

Horatio Nelson, who bore so glorious a part in these engagements, and who was destined to leave a name immortal in the rolls of fame, was born at Birnam-Thorpe, in the county of Norfolk, on the 29th September 1758. His father was rector of that parish, of respectable, but not noble descent. The young Horatio early evinced so decided a partiality for a sea life, that, though of a feeble constitution, he was sent on shipboard at the age of thirteen. Even before that first rude separation from the paternal home, however, the character of the future hero had shown itself. When a mere child he strayed far from home, with a peasant boy of his acquaintance; and after being absent the whole day, he was discovered alone, sitting composedly by the side of a brook, which he could not get over. "I wonder," said the lady who found him, "that hunger and fear did not drive you home." "Fear!" replied the future champion of England, "What is it? I never saw Fear." On another occasion, when his elder brother and he were returning to school, on horseback, they were obliged to return by a severe snow-storm. Mr Nelson, however, on their coming back, suspected there was some sham to avoid going to school, and sent them again on their journey. "If the road is dangerous, you may return," said he; "but recollect, I leave it to your honour." The snow was deep enough to have allowed them a reasonable excuse for returning home, but Horatio insisted on going on. "We must go on," said he; "remember, brother, it was left to our honour." There were some fine pears growing in the schoolmaster's garden, which all the boys desired, but none of them ventured to take. Horatio volunteered upon the service, was lowered at night by sheets from the bed-room window, brought away the pears, and divided them among the boys, keeping no part to himself. "I only took them," said he, "because every other boy was afraid."¹

He first entered the navy as a midshipman, on board the *Raisonné*, of which his maternal uncle was captain; but that vessel was soon after paid off. Nelson's love of adventure made him volunteer on board the *Racehorse*, which

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35.
Birth,
parentage,
and charac-
ter of Nel-
son.

¹ Southey's
Nelson, i.
1, 7.

enemy when going into action—"Our captains have their ships in admirable order; I wish they were well up with the enemy; a victory is very essential to England at this moment."—TUCKER'S *Life of St Vincent*, i. 255.

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36.
His first
entrance
into the
Navy.

was sent by the Admiralty on a voyage of discovery to the North Pole. The marvels of the North Seas, the perilous adventures of the seaman's life, amidst their boundless fields of ice, strongly attracted the young seaman's imagination. One night during the mid-watch, he dropped from the ship's side, and followed a huge bear for a great distance on the ice; his musket missed fire, but he was attacking him with the but-end, when Captain Ludlow, seeing his danger, fired a gun from the ship, which frightened the beast, and probably saved Nelson's life. Being severely reprimanded on his return for such rashness, "Sir," said he, "I wished to kill the bear, that I might carry the skin to my father." Subsequently he distinguished himself as a subaltern in various actions during the American war. Early in the revolutionary contest, he was employed in the siege of Bastia in the island of Corsica, which he reduced; a singular coincidence, that the greatest leaders both at land and sea in that struggle should have first signalised themselves in operations on the same island. After the battle of St Vincent's, and the bombardment of Cadiz, he was sent on an expedition against the island of Teneriffe; but though the attack, conducted with his wonted courage and skill, was at first successful, and the town for a short time was in the hands of the assailants, they were ultimately repulsed, with the loss of seven hundred men and Nelson's right arm. His ardent spirit chafed in inaction, and he eagerly sought out every occasion in which danger was to be fronted, or glory won.¹

¹ Southey's
Nelson, i. 9,
1784.

37.
His charac-
ter.

Gifted by nature with undaunted courage, indomitable resolution, and undecaying energy, Nelson was also possessed of the eagle glance, the quick determination, and coolness in danger, which constitute the rarest qualities of a consummate commander. Generous, open-hearted, and enthusiastic, the whole energies of his soul were concentrated in the love of his country; like the youth in Tacitus, he loved danger itself, not the rewards of courage; he was incessantly consumed by that passion for great achievements, that sacred fire, which is the invariable characteristic of heroic minds. His soul was constantly striving after historic exploits; generosity and magnanimity in danger were so natural to him, that they arose unbidden

on every occasion calculated to call them forth. On one occasion, during a violent storm off Minorca, Nelson's ship was disabled, and Captain Ball took his vessel in tow. Nelson thought, however, that Ball's ship would be lost if she kept her hold, and deeming his own case desperate, he seized the speaking-trumpet, and with passionate threats ordered Ball to let him loose. But Ball took his own trumpet, and in a solemn voice replied, "I feel confident I can bring you in safe: I therefore must not, and, by the help of Almighty God, I will not leave you." What he promised he performed, and on arriving in harbour, Nelson embraced him as his deliverer, and commenced a friendship which continued for life.¹

His whole life was spent in the service of his country; his prejudices, and he had many, were all owing to the excess of patriotic feeling; he annihilated the French navy, by fearlessly following up the new system of tactics, plunging headlong into the enemy's fleet, and doubling upon a part of their line, the same system which Napoleon practised in battles on land. The history of the world has seldom characters so illustrious to exhibit, and few achievements so momentous to commemorate. But it is to his public conduct, and genius afloat, only, that this transcendent praise is due; in private life he appears in a less favourable light. Vain, undiscerning, impetuous, he was often regardless of his domestic duties; an ardent lover, he was a faithless and indifferent husband. Possessed of no knowledge of mankind in civil life, he was little qualified to resist the impulse of his vehement temperament amidst its seductions. There he was frequently subject to the delusion of art, and sometimes seduced by the passions of wickedness. Yet there was something elevated even in his failings,—they were owing to the energetic temperament of his mind; they arose from passions nearly allied to virtue, and to which heroic characters in all ages have, in a peculiar manner, been subject. His patriotic spirit mastered the indignation which he frequently felt at his exploits not being rewarded in a more worthy spirit by his country: a forgetfulness for which no excuse can be found in our rulers, but which is too often the case when greatness is placed under the command of talent inferior to itself. In one unhappy instance, however, he was betrayed

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¹ Coleridge's
Friend.
Essay, iv.
iii. 249.
Southey's
Nelson, i.
195.
Ann. Reg.
98.

38.
And failings.

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into more serious delinquencies. If a veil could be drawn over the transactions at Naples, history would dwell upon him in his public character as a spotless hero; but justice requires that cruelty should never be palliated, and the rival of Napoleon must be shielded from none of the obloquy consequent on the fascination of female wickedness.

39.
Biography
of Lord St
Vincent.

Sir John Jarvis, afterwards created EARL ST VINCENT, one of the greatest and most renowned admirals that ever appeared in the British navy, possessed qualities which, if not so brilliant as those of his illustrious rival, were not less calculated for great and glorious achievements. He was born at Meaford, in Staffordshire, on the 21st January 1734. His father, who was Counsel and Solicitor to the Admiralty, was desirous to breed him up to his own profession, to which young Jarvis was by no means disinclined; but he was dissuaded from it, by being told by his father's coachman, as he sat beside him on the box, that all lawyers were rogues. Having afterwards heard from a companion some stories of the adventures of a sailor's life, he resolved to go to sea; ran away from school, and concealed himself on board a ship at Woolwich for that purpose. His father was by no means affluent, and gave him £20 when he heard where he was, which was all the patrimony he ever received. The young sailor afterwards drew a bill for another £20, which came back unpaid: he immediately changed his mode of living, quitted his mess, lived on the ship's allowance, washed and mended his own clothes, made three pair of trowsers out of the ticking of his bed, and thus saved money enough to take up his bill. So early does decision of character and integrity of principle in the really great display itself in life.¹

¹ Brenton's
Life of St
Vincent,
i. 14, 20.

40.
His first
services in
the Navy.

He first entered the service on board the Prince; but in the year 1759 he was lieutenant of the Namur, and was with that vessel at the siege and capture of Quebec in that year, in which service he greatly distinguished himself. An action which he soon after fought with the Foudroyant of eighty-four guns, was one of the most extraordinary displays of valour and skill even in that war so fertile in great exploits. The mutiny which broke out with such violence in the Channel fleet and at the Nore in 1797, had also its ramifications in the fleet under his command, off the Spanish coast; and by the mingled firmness and

clemency of his conduct, he succeeded in reducing the most disorderly vessels to obedience, with a singularly small effusion of human blood. He was resolution itself; danger never deterred, difficulty never embarrassed him, where duty was to be performed. What he did himself, he enforced without scruple from others. A severe disciplinarian, strict in his own duties, rigorous in the exaction of them from others, he yet secured the affections both of his officers and men by the impartiality of his decisions, the energy of his conduct, and the perfect nautical skill which he was known to possess. It is doubtful if even Nelson would have been equal to the extraordinary exertion of vigour and capacity with which, in a period of time so short as to be deemed impossible by all but himself, he succeeded in fitting out his squadron from the Tagus in February 1797, in sufficient time to intercept and defeat the Spanish fleet. In the high official duties as First Lord of the Admiralty, with which he was intrusted in 1802, he exhibited a most praiseworthy zeal and anxiety for the detection of abuses, and he succeeded in rooting out many lucrative corruptions which had fastened themselves upon that important branch of the public service; although he perhaps yielded with too much facility to that unhappy mania for reducing our establishments, which invariably seizes the English on the return of peace, and has so often exposed to the utmost danger the naval supremacy of Great Britain.¹

But in nothing, perhaps, was his energy and disinterested character more clearly evinced than in his conduct in 1798, when he dispatched Nelson to the Mediterranean at the head of the best ships in his own fleet, and furnished him with the means of striking a blow destined to eclipse even his own well-earned fame. But these two great men had no jealousy of each other: their whole emulation consisted in mutual efforts to serve their country, and they were ever willing to concede the highest mead of praise to each other. The mind of the historian, as it has been eloquently observed, "weary with recounting the deeds of human baseness, and mortified with contemplating the frailty of illustrious men, gathers a soothing refreshment from such scenes as these; where kindred genius, exciting only mutual admiration and honest

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1797.

¹ Brenton's
Life of St
Vincent, i.
200, 304.

41.

His noble
and disin-
terested
spirit.

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¹ Lord
Brougham's
Sketches of
Public Cha-
racters, 2d
Series.

rivalry, gives birth to no feeling of jealousy or envy, and the character which stamps real greatness, is found in the genuine value of the mass, as well as in the outward splendour of the die; the highest talents sustained by the purest virtue; the capacity of the statesman, and the valour of the hero, outshone by the magnanimous heart which beats only to the measures of generosity and justice."¹

42.
Birth and
early life of
Earl Howe.

Differing in many essential particulars from both of these illustrious men, EARL HOWE was one of the most distinguished characters which the English navy ever produced. He was born in 1725, the second son of Emanuel Howe, Member of Parliament for Nottingham, the eldest son of an old and distinguished family. Young Howe entered the navy at fourteen on board the *Severn*, which rounded Cape Horn with Commodore Anson, and shared in the distresses and sufferings of that memorable expedition. His character early displayed itself. Of him, perhaps, more truly than of any other of England's illustrious chiefs may it be said, as of the Chevalier Bayard, that he was without fear and without reproach. He had the enterprise and gallant bearing so general in all officers in the naval service of Great Britain; but these qualities in him were combined with coolness, firmness, and systematic arrangement, with a habitual self-control and humanity to others, almost unrivalled in those intrusted with supreme command. In early life he contracted an intimate friendship with General Wolfe, and was employed with him in the expedition against the *Isle d'Aix* in Basque Roads in 1757. "Their friendship," says Walpole, "was like the union of cannon and gunpowder. Howe, strong in mind, solid in judgment, firm of purpose; Wolfe, quick in conception, prompt in execution, impetuous in action." His coolness in danger may be judged of from one anecdote. When in command of the Channel fleet, after a dark and boisterous night, when the ships were in considerable danger of running foul, Lord Gardiner, then third in command, a most intrepid officer, next day went on board the *Queen Charlotte*, and enquired of Howe how he had slept, for that he himself had not been able to get any rest from anxiety of mind.² Lord Howe replied that he had slept perfectly well, for as he had taken every possible precau-

² Barrow's
Howe, chap.
xii. p. 420,
430.

tion before it was dark, for the safety of the ship and crew, this consciousness set his mind perfectly at ease.

In person he was tall and well-proportioned, his countenance of a serious cast, and dark, but relaxing at times into a sweet smile, which bespoke the mildness and humanity of his disposition. No one ever conducted the stern duties of war with more consideration for the sufferings both of his own men and his adversaries, or mingled its heroic courage with a larger share of benevolent feeling. Disinterested in the extreme, his private charities were unbounded, and in 1798, when government received voluntary gifts for the expenses of the war, he sent his whole annual income, amounting to eighteen hundred pounds, to the bank, as his contribution. Such was his humanity and consideration for the seamen under his command, that it was more by the attachment which they bore to him, than by any exertion of authority, that he succeeded in suppressing, without effusion of blood, the formidable mutiny in the Channel fleet. He was the founder of the great school of English admirals, and by his profound nautical skill, and long attention to the subject, first succeeded in reducing to practice that admirable system of tactics to which the unexampled triumphs of the war were afterwards owing. A disinterested lover of his country, entirely exempt from ambition of every kind, he received the rewards with which his Sovereign loaded him, with gratitude, but without desire: the only complaints he ever made of government, were for the neglect of the inferior naval officers who had served in his naval exploits.¹

CUTHBERT COLLINGWOOD, afterwards Lord Collingwood, one of the brightest ornaments of the British navy, was born at Newcastle-on-Tyne on 26th September 1748. His father, though possessed only of a moderate fortune, was of an ancient and respectable family, which had suffered for its fidelity to the house of Stuart. In early youth he attended a school in Newcastle kept by the Reverend Hugh Moises, where, among his playfellows, were two boys of the name of Scott, one of whom afterwards became the greatest lawyer of England, Lord Chancellor Eldon; the other, Lord Stowell, the judge in Europe most deeply

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1797.

43.

His generosity and disinterested virtue.

¹ Barrow's Life of Howe, chap. xii. 432.

44.

Birth and early history of Collingwood.

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learned in general jurisprudence. From his earliest years young Collingwood was remarkable for the sweetness and gentleness of his disposition, a peculiarity which never afterwards forsook him; and when first sent to sea, on board the *Shannon*, at the age of eleven, his heart was so melted by the separation from his family, that he sat crying in a corner of the vessel till a good-natured officer took him by the hand, and spoke kindly to him, to whom, with infantine simplicity, he offered a piece of cake his mother had given him. In 1774 he was engaged with a party of seamen in the battles of Bunkershill, and in 1776 he was sent to the West Indies, where Nelson was at the same time; and there commenced the friendship between these great men, which only terminated with the death of the latter.¹

¹ Collingwood's
Mem. i. 8,
11.

45.
His incessant public
duties.

In 1780 he was appointed to the command of the *Pelican* frigate, and in 1783 of the *Sampson* of 64 guns; and from that time till his death in 1810, he was almost continually at sea, and actively engaged in the service of his country. He bore a distinguished part in the glorious victory of the 1st June, when he commanded the *Barfleur*. Perhaps no officer ever went through so long and uninterrupted a course of public duty; for, of fifty years that he was in the navy, forty-four were spent in active service abroad; and from 1793 to his death in 1810, he was only one year ashore. This incessant toil, and the difficult and responsible diplomatic duties with which it was connected in his later years, when in command of the Mediterranean fleet, at length broke down a constitution naturally strong, and wore out a spirit blessed with unusual serenity, so that he died in 1810, on shipboard, at the age of sixty-one, literally a martyr in the service of his country. On one occasion he was two-and-twenty months at sea without ever once entering a port or dropping an anchor. This lengthened and harassing service constituted a peculiar hardship as regards Collingwood; for never was a man more warmly attached to his family, or who sighed more ardently, amidst all his glory, for the blessed reward of domestic love. But not a murmur ever escaped him at this lengthened and painful separation; and when once made aware that his country required, and could not dispense with his services,² he prepared to waste away and expire on ship-

² Collingwood's
Mem. i. 8,
12.

board, with the same alacrity as he would have met death amidst the thunders of Trafalgar.*

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1797.

46.

His character as a man.

Collingwood was the most spotless hero of that age of glory. He had not the passion for fame which consumed Nelson, nor the ardent genius which gave his arm the force of the thunderbolt. His turn of mind was different; it was of a milder and holier character; it was more akin to the spirit of Heaven. A sense of duty, a devoted patriotism, a forgetfulness of self, directed all his actions. Naturally mild and benevolent, he seldom ordered a corporal punishment without shedding tears; never without enduring intense suffering; nevertheless, no officer in the fleet maintained stricter discipline, or had his crew in more thorough subjection. So well was this understood in the navy, that when Lord St Vincent was engaged with so much vigour in repressing the spirit of insubordination in the Mediterranean fleet, at the time of the mutiny at the Nore, he frequently drafted the most ungovernable spirits into the *Excellent*. "Send them to Collingwood," he used to say, "and he will bring them to order." On one occasion a seaman was sent from the *Romulus*, who had painted one of the fore-castle guns, shotted to the muzzle, at the quarter-deck, and swore he would fire it, if the officers did not promise that he should receive no punishment. Collingwood, on his arrival, called him up before the ship's company, and said, "I know your character well. behave properly, and all shall be forgotten; but beware; if you attempt to excite insubordination in my ship, I will instantly put you up in a barrel and throw you into the sea." Under the treatment he received in the *Excellent*, the man soon became a good and obedient sailor.¹

¹ Coll. i. 65, 66.

No man more thoroughly understood the great art of tactics, that of precipitating himself at once into the enemy's line, and striking home wherever the blow fell: lion-hearted and undaunted, none led the way on such a service with more heroic resolution. Side by side with Nelson, he threw himself into the cluster of three-deckers

47.

His character as an admiral.

* "I have laboured past my strength: I have told Lord Mulgrave so, that I may come and enjoy the comforts of my own blessed family again, and get out of the bustle of the world, and of affairs which are too weighty for me. God bless me! how rejoiced will my poor heart be when I see you all again!"—*Lord Collingwood to Lady Collingwood, Aug. 13, 1806, Memoirs, ii. 236.*

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¹ *Infra*,
c. xxxix.
§ 100.

which at St Vincent's were wearing round to support the cut off part of their line; alone he plunged into the centre of the combined fleet at Trafalgar, and all but made the Spanish admiral in his huge three-decker strike, before another British ship had come up to his assistance.¹ Nor were his abilities in civil administration inferior to his capacity in war: at once a cautious and skilful diplomatist, he conducted the complicated affairs of Great Britain in the Mediterranean for the few years preceding his death, and when in command of the fleet on that station, with such ability, that nearly its whole management came at length to be intrusted to him, and the incessant toil thence arising at length brought him to an untimely grave. Exemplary in all the duties of domestic life, a firm friend, a kind and faithful husband, an affectionate parent, he found time, when in command of the fleet off Toulon, and charged with all the diplomacy of the Mediterranean, to devote much of his thoughts to his domestic circle, the education of his daughters, even the relief of the poor in his neighbourhood. A sense of duty, a forgetfulness of self, a deep feeling of religious obligation, were the springs of all his actions. If required to specify the hero whose life most completely embodied the great principles for which England contended in the war, and the maintenance of which at length brought her victorious out of its dangers, the historian would without hesitation fix on Collingwood.*

48.
Birth and
early years
of Lord
Duncan.

² *British
Naval Bio-
graphy*, 433.
Eiog. Univ.
sup. lxiii.
179.

ADAM DUNCAN, afterwards Viscount Duncan of Camperdown, was born at Dundee on the 1st July 1731, of which town his father was afterwards Provost. He received the rudiments of his education in that town, and was already remarked in his early youth for the suavity of manner and evenness of temper, which he continued to display through the whole of life. He entered the navy in 1740, on board of the Shoreham frigate, and was present at the taking of the Havannah by Commodore Keppel in 1761, when he commanded the Valiant, 74, on board of which the Commodore had hoisted his broad pendant.² On that occasion Duncan commanded the boats of the

* For ample authority for these observations, the reader is referred to the *Correspondence of Lord Collingwood*, published by G. L. Collingwood, Esq., in two volumes, one of the most interesting and delightful books in the English language.

squadron, and distinguished himself particularly by the ability with which they were conducted. When the American war broke out, he was appointed to the command of the *Monarch*, 74, and evinced great skill in contending with the superior fleets of France and Spain, when they cleared the Channel in 1779.

An opportunity, however, soon occurred of combating the enemy on terms of equality, and again asserting the superiority of the British flag. In 1780 he was sent under Rodney to co-operate in the revictualling of Gibraltar, then blockaded by the French and Spanish fleets. Off Cape St Vincent they fell in with the Spanish fleet in a heavy gale, and immediately gave chase, in the course of which the British copper-bottomed vessels rapidly gained on the enemy. The *Monarch* had not that advantage, but by Duncan's admirable management, he was one of the first in the fleet to get into action. He steered direct into the middle of the three sternmost of the enemy's vessels, and when warned of the danger of doing so before the other British ships could get up to his support, he calmly replied, "I wish to be among them," and held straight on. He was soon among the Spanish fleet, and engaged the *St Augustin* on one side, yard-arm to yard-arm, and two other vessels, one of which bore eighty guns, on the other, and succeeded in compelling the former to strike, and forcing the two latter to sheer off.* Subsequently he bore a distinguished part in the brilliant series of manœuvres by which Lord Howe, in 1782, revictualled Gibraltar, at the head of thirty-four ships of the line, in the face of the combined fleet of forty-six. On the 1st February 1793 he was made vice-admiral; but his merits were so little regarded by the Admiralty, seldom prone to bring forward persons who have not the advantage of aristocratic birth, that for long he could not obtain employment, and he even had serious thoughts of quitting the service altogether. At length, in April 1795, he received the chief command in the North Seas, and with it the opportunity, in its most critical period, of proving the saviour of his country.¹

Duncan's character, both in professional daring and domestic suavity, closely resembled that of Collingwood. He

CHAP.

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1797.

49.

His first
services at
sea.
16th Jan.
1780.

¹ British
Naval Bio-
graphy, 435.
Biog. Univ.
lxiii. 179.

* The *St Augustin* afterwards escaped during the gale.

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1797.

50.

His charac-
ter.

had the same rapid eye and intrepid decision in action, the same boldness in danger, the same vigour in command, the same gentleness in disposition. Tall, majestic in figure, with an athletic form and noble countenance, he recalled the image of those heroes in whom the imagination of the poets has loved to embody the combination of vigour and courage, with strength and beauty. The rapidity of his decision, the justice of his glance, was equal to that of Nelson himself: the breaking of the Dutch line at Camperdown, and interposition of the British fleet between the enemy and their own shore, was dictated by the same genius which led Nelson to pierce and assail in rear the French squadron at Aboukir. But the most glorious, because the most unexampled part of his career, was the manner in which, when deserted by all the remainder of his fleet except one ship, he kept his station off the Helder, during the mutiny of the Nore, and by his personal influence and courage, maintained at that terrible crisis his own crew in subjection, and with them the appearance of a blockade, with two ships of the line, against fifteen. "It is not going too far to say that on his single conduct on that occasion, the salvation of England depended; for if the Texel fleet had put to sea, and joined the Brest squadron during the mutiny at the Nore, where might now have been the British empire?"

51.
Undaunted
courage by
which he
suppressed
the mutiny
in his own
ship.

It was not without a violent struggle, and no small exertion, both of moral and physical courage, that the mutiny was suppressed, even in Duncan's own ship. Symptoms of insubordination had broken out in Yarmouth Roads when the other ships were dropping off to the Nore; and at length the crew mounted the rigging and gave three cheers, the well-known sign of mutiny. Duncan immediately ordered up the marines, who were perfectly steady, seized six of the mutineers, and called the whole ship's company on board. "My lads," said he, "I am not apprehensive of any violence you may exercise towards myself; I would far rather rule you by love than by fear; but I will, with my own hands, put to death the first person who shall venture to dispute my authority. Do you, sir," turning to one of the mutineers, "want to take the management of the ship out of my hands?" "Yes, sir," replied the fellow. Duncan upon this, who had his sword drawn,

raised it to plunge it in his breast; but the chaplain and secretary held his arm. The admiral upon this did not attempt to use the weapon, but, addressing the ship's company with emotion, said, "Let those who will stand by me and my officers go to the starboard side of the ship, that we may see who are our friends and who are our enemies." With one accord, the whole crew ran over except the six mutineers, who were left alone. They were immediately secured, and put in irons; and with this crew, recently so rebellious, did this noble admiral proceed, accompanied only by one ship of the line, the *Adamant*, to renew his station off the Texel. The mutineers soon evinced real repentance, and were let out by Duncan one by one; and never did a ship's company behave more nobly than the whole crew of the *Venerable* did, both in the blockade and at the battle of Camperdown. Such was Duncan's firmness; by such men it was at this vital crisis that the British empire was saved. Never in modern times was more courage combined with more gentleness; greater vigour with greater wisdom; purer patriotism with loftier religion; stronger professional genius with more elevated and devoted principle. If Great Britain, in her pacific and warlike administration, could reckon on a succession of such men as Collingwood and Duncan, she would indeed be immortal, for she would deserve immortality.¹

Less remarkable in general history than the illustrious heroes of whom a sketch has now been given, Sir JAMES de SAUMAREZ was scarcely inferior to any of them in naval skill, amiable character, and heroic intrepidity. He was born in St Peter Port, in Guernsey, on the 11th March 1757, so that he was already in middle life when the Revolutionary War commenced. His father, who was a respectable physician, was descended of an ancient and eminent family, which had contributed more than one gallant ornament to the British navy. Young de Saumarez received the rudiments of his education at Elizabeth College, in Guernsey, where he early earned such a taste for poetry, as showed he was qualified to have shone in the literary world, if his inclinations had led him in that direction. But, from a very early period his predilection for the navy was decided: the fame of his gallant uncles,

1797.

¹ Naval
Biography,
437, 438.

52.
Early his-
tory of De
Saumarez.

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1797.

¹ Ross's Life
of De Saumarez, i. 1,
21. Naval
Biography,
421.

one of whom had taken a French 84, with a British frigate, and both circumnavigated the globe with Anson, had strongly impressed his imagination; and accordingly, though his elder brother was already in the navy, his wishes were complied with, and on the 20th September 1767, he entered on board the *Soleby*, Captain O'Brien. His father, on parting put a purse, containing fifteen guineas, into his hand, observing, that as he had a large family, he hoped he would use it with economy; but that, when he wanted more, he might draw on his banker. So conscientious, however, was Saumarez, in attending to the recommendation, that his father said, the sight of his drafts never after gave any thing but pleasure.¹

53.
His first
naval ser-
vices.
12th Dec.
1781.

Saumarez was engaged, on board the *Bristol*, in several actions in the American war, particularly in the unsuccessful attack on Sullivan's Island, in which his coolness and intrepidity were so conspicuous that he was made a lieutenant; and having afterwards obtained the command of the *Tisiphone* fireship, he distinguished himself under Kempenfeldt in an attack on the French squadron, conveying the West India fleet, on which occasion he captured, with his fireship, a frigate of 36 guns. This brilliant action procured for him the command of the *Russel*, 74,—an extraordinary instance of rapid promotion for a young man who was not yet twenty-five years of age. In command of that ship, he fought under Rodney in the glorious battle of the 12th April,—engaged for some time the huge *Ville de Paris*, and was only prevented, by a signal from the admiral to heave to, from capturing, at the close of the day, a French disabled 74, of which he was in chase. On the breaking out of the Revolutionary War, he was appointed to the command of the *Crescent*, of 42 guns, and 257 men, and soon made prize of *La Reunion*, of 36, and 320 men,—a success the more remarkable, that it was one of the first naval triumphs of the war, and was gained without the loss of a man, while the French had 120 killed and wounded. His nautical skill and coolness were soon after not less signally evinced, by the manner in which, in company with two other small frigates, he eluded the pursuit, between Guernsey and the French coast, of an enemy's squadron, consisting of two line of battle-ships

20th Oct.
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and two frigates. Appointed afterwards to the *Orion*, 74, he took part, with his accustomed skill and gallantry, in the action between Lord Bridport's fleet and the Brest squadron, off L'Orient, on 23d June 1795; and with such unwearied vigilance did he conduct the blockade of Brest, that during the whole time he was in command of the inshore squadron, which lasted several years, not a single square-rigged French vessel of any description got in or out of that harbour. He was fortunate enough to join Admiral Jarvis (Lord St Vincent,) in the *Orion*, 74, a few days before the glorious battle of St Vincent's; we have seen, that the gigantic *Santissima Trinidad* struck to his ship, bearing just half its number of guns, and that to his skill and daring the triumph of that day is in a considerable degree to be ascribed; and he will again appear with equal lustre, amidst the thunder of Aboukir, and in the terrors of Algesiraz Bay.¹

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¹ Ross's Life of De Saumarez, i. 28, 173. Naval Biography, 495.

He was one of the officers peculiar to that age, and in a great measure to the British nation, whose character embodied, like that of Collingwood and Duncan, the true spirit of the anti-revolutionary war. An exalted piety, an elevated patriotism, were the mainsprings of his life, and both appeared with the most signal lustre in its most trying emergencies. None of the Captains at the Nile led their ship with more intrepidity into the hottest of the fire, and none did so under a more devout sense of the great cause of religion and virtue, for which they were contending, or of the supreme superintendence of human affairs. He was the first after the battle was over to hoist, in conformity with Nelson's recommendation, the pendant at the mizen peak, the well-known signal for the ship's company to assemble at prayers; and, however much disposed to ridicule such observances in their own country, or under other circumstances, the French prisoners were impressed with a passing feeling, at least, of respect and admiration, when they beheld a whole ship's company, so recently after such a conflict, when the decks were still encumbered with dead, and stained with blood, prostrate on their knees, to return thanks, with fervent devotion, to the Supreme Disposer of events, for the greatest naval victory recorded in history.² So just and humane had been his management of his ship's company, although the

54.
His character.

² Ross's Life of De Saumarez, i. 224.

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¹ Ross's Life
of De Sau-
marez, ii.
327, 329.
Naval Bio-
graphy.

55.
Expedition
of Nelson to
Teneriffe.
24th July.

² James, ii.
56, 57.
Vict. et
Conq. ii. vi.
260.
Southey's
Life of Nel-
son, i. 186,
187.

most exact discipline was observed, that, alone almost of all the vessels in the fleet, no symptoms of insubordination appeared among them during the trying season which preceded and followed the mutiny at the Nore. Enthusiastic in his profession, zealous to the last degree in the public service, he never spared his own exertions, and often passed sleepless nights from watching and anxiety; but all his officers and men had their wonted periods of repose, which the admiral denied to himself alone. Yet even then, when his countenance bore the deep lines of anxiety, it was observed, that all traces of care disappeared when letters arrived from his family, the scene of his fixed attachment and ceaseless interest. Exemplary in all the duties of domestic life, a firm friend, a generous master, devoted to his wife and children, the secret spring of all his actions was a deep and manly feeling of piety, which pervaded all his actions, and appeared with peculiar grace and fitness amidst the duties and dangers of a naval life.¹

One combined naval and military operation of the same year, requires a special notice, not so much from its intrinsic importance, as from the celebrity of the hero by whom it was conducted. On the 15th July a squadron, consisting of three seventy-fours, the *Leander* of 50 guns, two frigates, and a brig, was placed by Earl St Vincent under the orders of Admiral (then Sir Horatio) Nelson, to attack Teneriffe. They arrived off the island on the night of the 28th, and an attempt was immediately made to land a body of seamen and marines from the frigates to take possession of the heights which commanded the fort of Vera Cruz, the principal defence of the island. The boats, however, could not land from the violence of the surf on the shore, till day-light, and then the heights were found to be so strongly occupied by the enemy, that it was hopeless to attempt to carry them with the men from the frigates only. All hopes of a surprise were now at an end, and the Spaniards in the island were making the most vigorous preparations for resistance; but Nelson was not the man to abandon an enterprise with which he was intrusted as long as a hope of success remained, and it was therefore resolved to attempt to carry the island by main force.²

At eleven at night on the 24th, the boats of the fleet,

containing about a thousand men, proceeded in six divisions towards the mole. The service was well understood to be a desperate one; and though Nelson's orders were precise not to land himself unless his presence was absolutely necessary, yet his ardent spirit could not keep aloof when danger was to be encountered, and he led the attack in person. The sailors pulled so silently that they were not discovered till half-past one in the morning, when just half a gun-shot from the mole-head, where they were to land. A loud cheer was then given, and the boats rowed as hard as they could towards the shore. But the Spaniards were well prepared. The alarm-bell answered the cheer, and forty pieces of cannon and a tremendous fire of musketry immediately opened on the flotilla. The bright light suddenly illuminating the gloom, showed the position of every boat, and enabled the enemy to direct the next discharges with unerring precision. Nevertheless Nelson and Freemantle, with five boats, reached the mole, landed instantly, stormed it, though defended by four hundred men, and spiked all the guns on the batteries. But this work had no protection from the citadel in rear, and the fire from it was so heavy, that nearly all the gallant assailants were struck down. Nelson himself, when in the act of stepping ashore, received a musket-shot through the right elbow and fell; but as he fell, he caught his sword, which he had just drawn, in his left hand, and held it firmly, as he lay in the bottom of the boat almost fainting from loss of blood. At this instant the Fox boat received a six-and-thirty pounder between wind and water, and went down with ninety-seven men on board. Eighty-three were saved, mainly by the heroic efforts of Nelson himself, who, disabled as he was, exerted himself amidst the frightful scene to save the sufferers. He could not, however, from loss of blood, remain longer in action, and was taken back to his own vessel, where his arm was amputated.¹*

Meanwhile Troubridge and Waller, with their division of the boats, had been more fortunate. Having missed the mole during the darkness of a tempestuous night, they yet reached the shore, and landed under a battery near the

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56.

Commence-
ment of the
attack.
July 24.

¹ Southey's
Nelson, i.
193, 194.
James, ii. 58.
Vict. et
Conq. viii.
261, 262.

57.

Its failure.

* Nelson merrily climbed up the ship's side, holding by his left arm, and said, "I know I must lose my arm, and the sooner it is off the better. Let me alone; I need no assistance; I have my legs yet."—SOUTHEY'S *Nelson*, i. 193.

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citadel. The tremendous surf, however, filled all the boats before landing, and soaked the whole powder, so that the muskets would not go off. Nevertheless this little band, only three hundred and forty, pushed on with their cutlasses, and reached the great square of the town, the appointed rendezvous for all the storming parties. There, however, they waited in vain for the co-operating columns from the side of the mole, and after remaining two hours in suspense, tried to storm the citadel without ladders; but the increasing numbers of the enemy, who were now collected from all quarters, and three thousand strong, precluded the possibility of even reaching its walls. Al- less of storming them, without powder to fire their muskets. Freemantle, therefore, was under the necessity of proposing a capitulation, in virtue of which the British were to be at liberty to re-embark with their arms and boats, if saved, and became bound not to attack any other of the Canary Islands. To these terms the Spanish governor acceded, and he had even the generosity to present all the British with a ration of biscuit and wine before they embarked, and intimated that all their wounded should be received into the town hospital.* The British lost 250 men killed and wounded in this disastrous affair, a loss nearly as great as they sustained in the victory of St Vincent's.¹

¹ James, ii. 58, 60. Southey's *Life of Nelson*, i. 195, 197. *Vict. et Conq.* viii. 262, 263.

58. Suppression of the mutiny in the fleet off Cadiz.

April 3.

The glorious victory of St Vincent's, in which they had borne so memorable a part, and the mingled firmness and judgment of Lord St Vincent already noticed in combating it, were far from extinguishing the seeds of mutiny which at this period were so widely spread through the British navy. At length, when three of the ships' companies on their voyage from Spithead to Cadiz, had become extremely turbulent, by active measures the ringleaders were secured, and ordered to be executed on board the St George, where the mutiny had first shown itself. On their arrival a plan was formed by the crew for seizing the vessel, deposing the officers, and liberating the criminals. Captain Præd of the St George, having received intelligence of this design, approached the mutineers, who were already assembled in the waist of the ship, and said, "I know

* A Spanish youth, named Don Bernardo Collagon, stript himself of his shirt to make bandages for one of the English, against whom, not an hour before, he had been engaged in battle. There are the elements of a truly noble character in the Spaniards — See Southey's *Life of Nelson*, i. 197.

your designs, and shall oppose them at the risk of my life. You have determined to oppose the authority of your officers; I am determined to do my duty: I know most of you are deluded; but I know your ringleaders, and will bring them to justice. I command you to disperse." The whole crew stood firm. Upon this Praed, followed by his first lieutenant, John Hatley, rushed amidst the crowd, seized two of the leaders, dragged them out by main force, and put them in irons. Next morning the three original mutineers were hanged from the yard-arm of the *St George*, and two days after the two others were seized. It was by such intrepidity that this terrible storm in the fortunes of England was surmounted.¹

The great victory of St Vincent's entirely disconcerted the well-conceived designs of Truguet for the naval campaign; but, later in the season, another effort, with an inferior fleet, but more experienced seamen, was made by the Dutch Republic. For a very long period the naval preparations in Holland had been most extraordinary, and far surpassed any thing attempted by the United Provinces for above a century past. The stoppage of the commerce of the Republic had enabled the government, as it afterwards did that of the United States in America, to man their vessels with a choice selection both of officers and men; and from the well-known courage of the sailors, it was anticipated that the contest with the English fleet would be more obstinate and bloody than any which had yet occurred from the commencement of the war. De Winter, who commanded the armament, was a staunch Republican, and a man of tried courage and experience. Nevertheless, being encumbered with land forces, destined for the invasion of Ireland, he did not attempt to leave the Texel till the beginning of October, when the English fleet having been driven to Yarmouth roads by stress of weather, the Dutch government gave orders for the troops to be disembarked, and the fleet to set sail, and make the best of its way to the harbour of Brest. Their object was to co-operate in the long-projected expedition against that island, now fermenting with discontent, and containing at least two hundred thousand men, organised, and ready for immediate rebellion.²

Admiral Duncan was no sooner apprised by the signals

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¹ James, ii.
60, 61.

^{59.}
Great pre-
parations of
the Dutch.

9th Oct.

² Vict. et
Cong. viii.
271, 274.
Wolfe Tone
ii. 197, 201.

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60.

Commence-
ment of the
battle of
Camper-
down.

of his cruisers that the Dutch fleet was at sea, than he weighed anchor with all imaginable haste, and stretched across the German Ocean with so much expedition, that he got near the hostile squadron before it was out of sight of the shore of Holland. The Dutch fleet consisted of sixteen ships of the line and eleven frigates; the English, of sixteen ships of the line and three frigates. Duncan's first care was to station his fleet in such a manner as to prevent the enemy from returning to the Texel; and having done this, he bore down upon his opponents, and hove in sight of them, on the following morning, drawn up in order of battle at the distance of nine miles from the coast between CAMPERDOWN and Egmont. With the same instinctive genius which afterwards inspired a similar resolution to Nelson at Aboukir, he gave the signal to break the line, and get between the enemy and the shore—a movement which was immediately and skilfully executed in two lines of attack, and proved the principal cause of the glorious success which followed, by preventing their withdrawing into the shallows, out of the reach of the British vessels, which, for the most part, drew more water than their antagonists. Admiral Onslow first broke the line, and commenced a close combat. As he approached the Dutch line, his captain observed, the enemy were lying so close that they could not penetrate. "The Monarch will make a passage," replied Onslow, and held on undaunted. The Dutch ship opposite gave way to let him pass, and he entered the close-set line. In passing through, he poured one broadside with tremendous effect into the starboard ship's stern, and the other with not less into the bows of the Jupiter, bearing the Dutch vice-admiral, whom he immediately lay alongside, and engaged at three yards' distance. He was soon followed by Duncan himself at the head of the second line, who pierced the centre, and laid himself beside De Winter's flag-ship, and shortly the action became general, each English ship engaging its adversary, but still between them and the lee-shore.¹

De Winter, perceiving the design of the enemy, gave the signal for his fleet to unite in close order; but from the thickness of the smoke, his order was not generally perceived, and but partially obeyed. Notwithstanding the utmost efforts of valour on the part of the Dutch, the

¹ Lord
Duncan's
Account.
16th Oct.
Ann. Reg.
100. Jom.
x. 213, 214.
Brentan, i.
347, 348.
James, ii. 69.
70. Vict. et
Conq. viii.
271, 275.

t re-
sistance of
De Winter.

superiority of English skill and discipline soon appeared in the engagement, yard-arm to yard-arm, which followed. For three hours Admiral Duncan and De Winter fought within pistol shot; but by degrees the Dutchman's fire slackened: his masts fell one by one overboard amidst the loud cheers of the British sailors; and at length he struck his flag, after half his crew were killed or wounded, and his ship was incapable of making any further resistance. De Winter was the only man on his quarter-deck who was not either killed or wounded; he lamented that, in the midst of the carnage which literally floated the deck of his noble ship, he alone should have been spared.* Duncan's ship, however, was very seriously injured in this desperate conflict, and De Winter did not strike till, besides the Venerable, he was assailed by the Ardent and Belford. Meanwhile Onslow, in the Monarch, leaving the Haarlem, Dutch 74, to the Powerful, continued close alongside the Jupiter; a vehement engagement, yard-arm to yard-arm, between these two equal antagonists, took place; and every ship in the British fleet was engaged in a furious combat with an antagonist in the enemy's line, but all between them and the Dutch shore. At this time the Hercules, Dutch 74, caught fire, and drifted close past the Venerable, Duncan's ship; and though the Dutch crew, in a surprisingly quick manner, extinguished the flames, yet as they had thrown their powder overboard to avoid explosion, they had no further means of resistance, and were obliged to strike their colours to the Triumph.¹

—The Dutch vice-admiral in the Jupiter soon after struck to Admiral Onslow; and by four o'clock, eight ships of the line, two of fifty-six guns, and two frigates, were in the hands of the victors. Twelve sail of the line had struck their colours; but, owing to the bad weather which succeeded, nine only were secured. No less skilful than brave, Admiral Duncan now gave the signal for the combat to cease, and the prizes to be secured, which was done with no little difficulty, as, during the battle, both fleets had drifted before a tempestuous wind to within five miles

¹ Duncan's Official Account, 12th Oct. Ann. Reg. App. to Chron. 374. Brenton, i. 348, 349. James, ii. 69, 70. Vict. et Conq. viii. 271.

62. Glorious victory gained by the British.

* De Winter and Admiral Duncan dined together in the latter's ship on the day of the battle, in the most friendly manner. In the evening, they played a rubber at whist; and De Winter was the loser—upon which he good-humouredly observed, it was rather hard to be beaten twice in one day by the same opponent.—Brenton *ut supra*, and Personal Knowledge.

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1 Brent. i.
348, 354-5.
James, ii. 71,
73. Ann.
Reg. 100,
101. Jom.
x. 213.
Toul. vi.
242, 243.

63.
Results of
this battle.

of the shore, and were now lying, in nine fathoms water. It was owing to this circumstance alone that any of the Dutch squadron escaped; but when the English withdrew into deeper water, Admiral Story collected the scattered remains of his fleet, and sought refuge in the Texel, while Duncan returned with his prizes to Yarmouth roads. The battle was seen distinctly from the shore, where a vast multitude was assembled, who beheld in silent despair the ruin of the armament on which the national hopes had so long been rested. During the two days of tempestuous weather which ensued, two of the prizes mutinied against the English guard on board, and escaped into the Texel; and the Delft, a seventy-four, went down, astern of the ship which had her in tow. But eight line-of-battle ships, and two of fifty-six guns, were brought into Yarmouth roads, amidst the cheers of innumerable spectators, and the transports of a whole nation.¹*

This action was one of the most important fought at sea during the revolutionary war, not only from the valour displayed on both sides during the engagement, but the important consequences with which it was attended. The Dutch fought with a courage worthy of the descendants of Van Tromp and De Ruyter, as was evinced by the loss on either part, which in the British was one thousand and forty men, and in the Batavian, one thousand one hundred and sixty, besides the crews of the prizes, who amounted to above six thousand. The appearance of the British ships, at the close of the action, was very different from what it usually is after naval engagements; no masts were down, little damage done to the sails or rigging; like their worthy adversaries, the Dutch had fired at the hull of their enemies, which accounts for the great loss in killed and wounded in this well-fought engagement. All

* The relative force of the two fleets stood thus :

	British.	Dutch.
Ships,	16	16
Broadside guns,	575	517
Crews,	8,221	7,157
Tons of ships,	23 601	20,937

Thus, the superiority upon the whole was considerably in favour of the British, but not so much so as would at first sight appear, as three Dutch frigates, not named in the above list, took an active part in the fight, raking some of the British line-of-battle ships, to which the British had no similar force to oppose. Nevertheless, the Dutch fought most nobly; and it was the best fight that occurred during the war — See JAMES, ii. 73, 74.

the English ships had numerous holes in their hulls, and not a few balls sticking in them, but the rigging of many, of which the Monarch was one, was untouched. The Dutch were all either dismasted, or so riddled with shot, as to be altogether unserviceable. On every side marks of a desperate conflict were visible. But the contest was no longer equal; England had quadrupled her strength since the days of Charles II., while the United Provinces had declined both in vigour and resources. Britain was now as equal to a contest with the united navies of Europe, as she was then to a war with the fleets of an inconsiderable republic.¹

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¹ James, ii.
70, 71. Ann.
Rep. 191.

But the effects of this victory, both upon the security and the public spirit of Britain, were in the highest degree important. Achieved as it had been by the fleet which had recently struck such terror into every class by the mutiny at the Nore, and coming so soon after that formidable event, it both elevated the national spirit by the demonstration it afforded how true the patriotism of the seamen still was, and by the deliverance from the immediate peril of invasion which it effected. A subscription was immediately entered into for the widows and orphans of those who had fallen in this battle, and it soon amounted to £52,000. The northern courts, whose conduct had been dubious previous to this great event, were struck with terror; and all thoughts of reviving the principles of the armed neutrality were laid aside. But great as were the external results, it was in its internal effects that the vast importance of this victory was chiefly made manifest. Despondency was no longer felt; the threatened invasion of Ireland was laid aside; Britain was secure. England now learned to regard without dismay the victories of the French at land, and, secure in her seagirt isle, to trust in those defenders—

64.
Great effects
of this vic-
tory.

"Whose march is o'er the mountain wave,
Whose home is on the deep."

The joy, accordingly, upon the intelligence of this victory, was heartfelt and unexampled, from the sovereign on the throne to the beggar in the hovel. Bonfires and illuminations were universal; the enthusiasm spread to every breast; the fire gained every heart; and, amidst the roar of artillery and the festive light of cities, faction dis-

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appeared, and discontents sank into neglect. Numbers date from the rejoicings consequent on this achievement their first acquaintance with the events of life, among whom may be reckoned the author, then residing under his paternal roof, in a remote parish of Shropshire, whose earliest recollection is of the sheep-roasting and rural festivities which took place on the joyful intelligence being received in that secluded district.

65.
Honours bestowed on Admirals Duncan and Sir John Jarvis.

The national gratitude was liberally bestowed on the leaders in these glorious achievements. Sir John Jarvis received the title of Earl St Vincent; Admiral Duncan that of Viscount Duncan of Camperdown, and Commodore Nelson that of Sir Horatio Nelson. From these victories may be dated the commencement of that concord among all classes, and that resolute British spirit, which never afterwards deserted this country. Her subsequent victories were for conquest, these were for existence; from the deepest dejection, and an unexampled accumulation of disasters, she arose at once into security and renown; the democratic spirit gradually subsided, from the excitation of new passions, and the force of more ennobling recollections; and the rising generation, who began to mingle in public affairs, now sensibly influenced national thought, by the display of the patriotic spirit which had been nursed amidst the dangers and the glories of their younger years.

66.
Abortive descent in Pembroke Bay.
Capture of Trinidad.

13th Feb.

The remaining maritime operations of this year are hardly deserving of notice. A descent of fourteen hundred men, chiefly composed of deserters and banditti, in the bay of Pembroke, in February, intended to distract the attention of the British government from Ireland, the real point of attack, met with the result which might have been anticipated, by all the party being taken prisoners. Early in spring, an expedition, under General Abercromby, captured the island of Trinidad, with a garrison of seventeen hundred men, and a ship of the line in the harbour, three other line of battle ships, being burned by the Spanish admiral to prevent their falling into the enemy's hands. Two months after, the same force failed in an attack on Porto Rico;¹ notwithstanding which, however, the superiority of the British over the navy of their combined enemies was eminently conspicuous during the

¹ Ann. Reg. 89, 93, 94.
Jom. x. 218.

whole year, both in the Atlantic and Indian oceans; and, in particular, an expedition from the French part of St Domingo against the forts of Trois and St Marks, which had been wrested from them in that island, was defeated, after an obstinate struggle, with great loss.

It was just permitted to the illustrious statesman, to whose genius and foresight the development of the dauntless spirit which led to these glorious consequences is mainly, under Providence, to be ascribed, to witness its results. Mr Burke, whose health had been irretrievably broken by the death of his son, and who had long laboured under severe and increasing weakness, at length breathed his last at his country-seat of Beaconsfield, on the 9th July 1797. His counsels on English politics during his last eventful moments, were of the same direct, lofty, and uncompromising spirit which had made his voice sound as the note of a trumpet to the heart of England. His last work, the Letters on a Regicide Peace, published a few months before his death, is distinguished by the same fervent eloquence, profound wisdom, and far-seeing sagacity, which characterised his earlier productions on the French Revolution. As his end approached, the vigour of his spirit, if possible, increased; and his prophetic eye anticipated, from the bed of death, those glorious triumphs which were destined to immortalise the close of the conflict. "Never," exclaimed he, in his last hours, "never succumb. It is a struggle for your existence as a nation. If you must die, die with the sword in your hand. But I have no fears whatever for the result. There is a salient living principle of energy in the public mind of England, which only requires proper direction to enable her to withstand this or any other ferocious foe. Persevere, therefore, till this tyranny be overpast."¹

Thus departed this life, if not in the maturity of years, at least in the fulness of glory, Edmund Burke. The history of England, prodigal as it is of great men, has no such philosophic statesman to boast; the annals of Ireland, graced though they be with splendid characters, have no such shining name to exhibit. His was not the mere force of intellect, the ardour of imagination, the richness of genius; it was a combination of the three, unrivalled, perhaps, in any other age or country. Endowed by na-

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67.
Death of Mr
Burke.

9th July.

1 Regicide
Peace, *ad fin.*

68.
His charac-
ter as a
writer.

Ch. p.
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ture with a powerful understanding, an inventive fancy, a burning eloquence, he exhibited the rare combination of these great qualities with deep thought, patient investigation, boundless research. His speeches in Parliament were not so impressive as those of Mirabeau in the National Assembly, only because they were more profound; he did not address himself with equal felicity to the prevailing feeling of the majority. He was ever in advance of the times, and left to posterity the difficult task of reaching, through pain and suffering, the elevation to which he was at once borne on the wings of prophetic genius. Great, accordingly, and deserved, as was his reputation in the age in which he lived, it was not so great as it has since become; and strongly as subsequent times have felt the truth of his principles, they are destined to rise into still more general celebrity in the future ages of mankind. His eloquence in Parliament, though often in the highest degree brilliant, and always founded on profound thought, was seldom effective. It was a common observation at the time, that his rising acted like the dinner-bell in thinning the House. In this there is nothing surprising: he was too far before his age. Eloquence, to be popular, must be in advance of the age, and *but a little* in advance.

69.
Parallel of
Johnson and
Burke as
writers.

Burke, throughout life, was on terms of intimate friendship with Johnson: and no one more strongly felt the vast extent of his genius. His celebrated saying, "Sir, you cannot stand for five minutes under a shed with Mr Burke, during a shower of rain, without hearing something worth recollecting," shows in what estimation he was held by the great philosopher of the eighteenth century. Their minds were, in many respects, similar: in others, so different as to have scarce any affinity to each other. Both had a deep sense of religion, a profound feeling of duty, high principles of honour, an ardent patriotism, extensive erudition. Both had vast stores of acquired learning, which restrained without oppressing in each the fire of an ardent and poetical imagination. Both knew mankind well in all ranks, had seen life in all its bearings, had great powers of conversation, and had observed and meditated much on human affairs. But in other respects, their characters were essentially different. Their opposite habits in life had not merely given them different turns of thought, but

led them to exult in different modes of showing their powers. Composition was the great channel of Burke's greatness, as conversation was of Johnson's. Burke's writings are as much superior to Johnson's, as Johnson's sayings are to Burke's. The habit and necessity of public speaking had made the Parliamentary orator burst through the trammels of an artificial style, which, in writing, coerced the recluse author of the Rambler. Johnson's solitary independence and asperity of character enabled him to give a point to his sayings, which the practical statesman naturally shunned, or perhaps did not possess. No collection of Burke's sayings could have equalled what are to be met with in Boswell's Johnson: but Johnson could never have written the Reflections on the French Revolution or Regicide Peace.

Like all men of a sound intellect, an ardent disposition, and an independent character, Mr Burke was strongly attached to the principles of freedom; and, during the American war, when those principles appeared to be endangered by the conduct of the English government, he stood forth as an uncompromising leader of the Opposition in Parliament. He was from the outset, however, the friend of freedom only, in conjunction with its indispensable allies, order and property; and the severing of the United States from the British empire, and the establishment of a pure Republic beyond the Atlantic, appears to have given the first rude shock to his visions of the elevation and improvement of the species, and suggested the painful doubt, whether the cause of liberty might not, in the end, be more endangered by the extravagance of its supporters than by the efforts of its enemies. These doubts were confirmed by the first aspect of the French Revolution; and while many of the greatest men of his age were dazzled by the brightness of its morning light, he at once discerned, amidst the deceitful blaze, the small black cloud which was to cover the world with darkness. With the characteristic ardour of his disposition, which often led him into vehemence and invective, he instantly espoused the opposite side; and in so doing he severed, without hesitation, the connexions and friendships of his whole life.

He had the proud and solitary independence which so-

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70.

His views
on the
French Re-
volution.

E. T. A. P.

XXII.

1797.

71.

And character as a political philosopher.

often characterises real genius. Relying on his own convictions, he was confident against the world in arms. Nor has this patriotic self-sacrifice, this heroic spirit, been without its reward.* Posterity has already done justice to his principles. He is universally regarded as the first of modern political philosophers. In the prosecution of his efforts in defence of order, he was led to profounder principles of political wisdom than any intellect, save that of Bacon, had reached, and which are yet far in advance of the general understanding of mankind. His was not the instinctive horror at revolution which arises from the possession of power, the prejudices of birth, or the selfishness of wealth. On the contrary, he brought to the consideration of the great questions which then divided society, prepossessions only on the other side, a heart long warmed by the feelings of liberty, a disposition enthusiastic in its support, a lifetime spent in its service. He was led to combat the principles of Jacobinism from an early and clear perception of their consequences; from foreseeing that they would infallibly, if successful, destroy the elements of freedom; and, in the end, leave to society, bereft of all its bulwarks, only an old age of slavery and decline. It was not as the enemy, but the friend of liberty, that he was the determined opponent of the Revolution; and such will ever be the foundation in character on which the most resolute, because the most enlightened and the least selfish, resistance to democratic ascendancy will be founded.

END OF VOLUME V.

